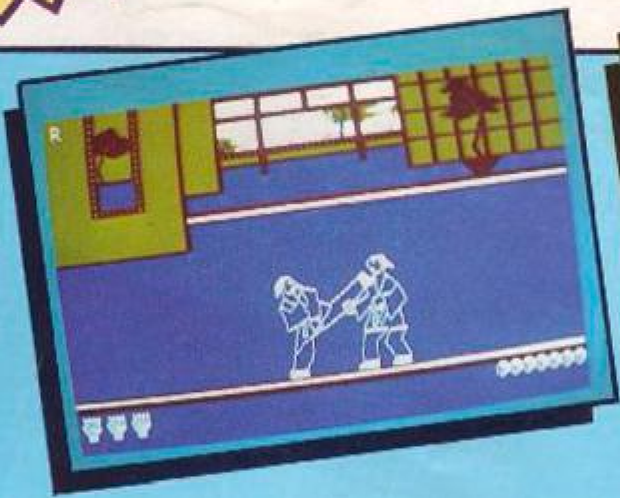
Created on Amstrad keyboards for Amstrad users by Amstrad addicts

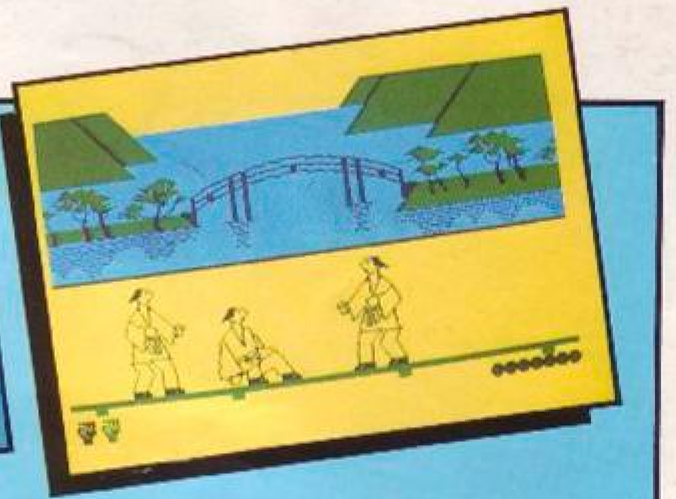
No.4 CHRISTMAS 1985 Special issue, special price £1.50

NOT an official Amstrad publication!!

AMSTRAD ACTION

THE MOULD-BREAKING MEGAZINE FROM FUTURE PUBLISHING





KUNG FU

Demanding, terrifying, body-crunching oriental combat!

- Superb animation
- Kicks, punches, chops
- Slow-motion action replays
- Exciting two-player option
- Atmospheric music

SIDE 1



MEGA GIFT

Two amazing new games for the Amstrad CPC 464/664/6128 – for more details and full instructions see p16-17

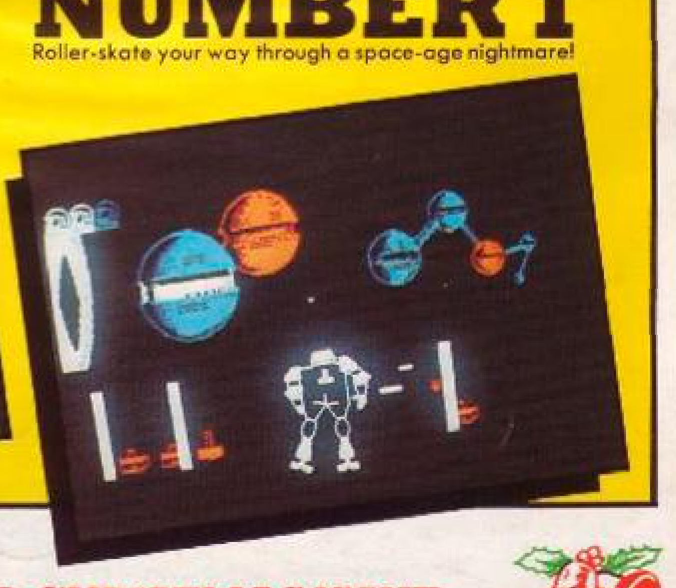
SIDE 2

- Super-fast 3D graphics
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- Ducking, leaping, dodging
- Skulls, vultures, cobras
- Frantic musical accompaniment

NUMBER 1

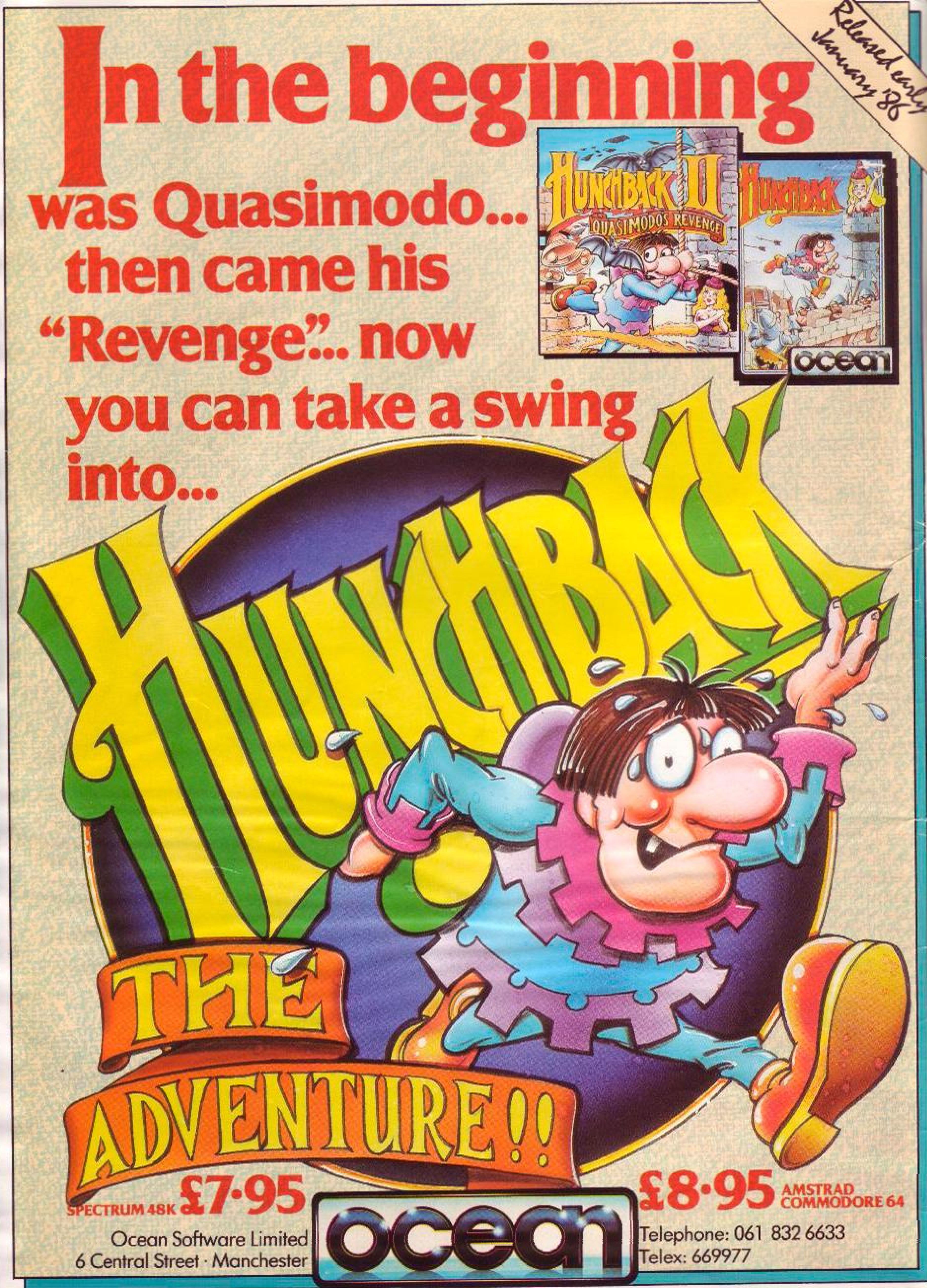
Roller-skate your way through a space-age nightmare!





INSIDE OUR BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE...

464 into 6128 ● easy graphics designing ● hilarious board game ● maps of Marsport, Nonterraqueous ● 1986 diary ● game review bonanza ● spreadsheets ● competitions ● playing tips ● special offers ● and much more


Released early January '86
In the beginning
was Quasimodo...
then came his
"Revenge"... now
you can take a swing
into...
HUNCHBACK II
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THE LINE-UP

AMSTRAD ACTION CHRISTMAS 1985

Dear Readers,
First of all – Merry Christmas.
Second – and a happy New Year.

Well, that's the seasonal goodwill out of the way. By now you should have taken in the stunning news on the cover. Two previously unreleased Ocean games for next to nothing. OK, so we had to put the price up for the occasion, but we're sure you'll think it's worth it. Bob Wade spent hours playing the two games, so they must be good.

We think you'll find the rest of this first Christmas issue of Amstrad Action pretty action-packed as well. We're bigger than last month because we've got some extra-special festive treats: stacks of maps, an exciting computerised board game, some predictions of what might happen next year (if pigs could fly), and a review of the DK Tronics memory expansions. As if all that weren't enough there's extra space for the regular reviews, adventures and letters. Don't read it all at once, or you might need all the Alka-Seltzer.

The AA Team will be taking a short Christmas break to recover from the wild festivities here in Somerton, but normal transmission will be resumed early in 1986. See you then.

Peter Connor

Amstrad Action
Valeside
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Somerton
Somerset TA11 7PS
Tel: 0458-74011
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Subscription games

The latest news on the US Gold games included in our subscription offer is as follows. Four of the games, *Beach Head*, *Raid*, *Bruce Lee* amd *Bounty Bob* have been released and are being sent out as orders come in. *Impossible Mission* was delayed from its original launch date of November 7th, but definitely should be out by early December. *Dambusters*, however, is still, at time of writing some way off. US Gold say it's touch and go whether it's released in time for Christmas. If you want your games quickly, steer clear of that one.

Meanwhile the previous offer with Ocean and Imagine games has continued to cause a few problems, due mainly to the much-delayed release of *Hypersports* (originally due out in September!) Although we've been able to review a pre-production copy of the game, we're STILL awaiting finished copies for despatch, a fact which we fervently hope won't be true by the time you read this. Thankyou everyone (well almost everyone!) for being so patient in waiting for your copy. Once again we're really sorry for the hold up.

Cartoons

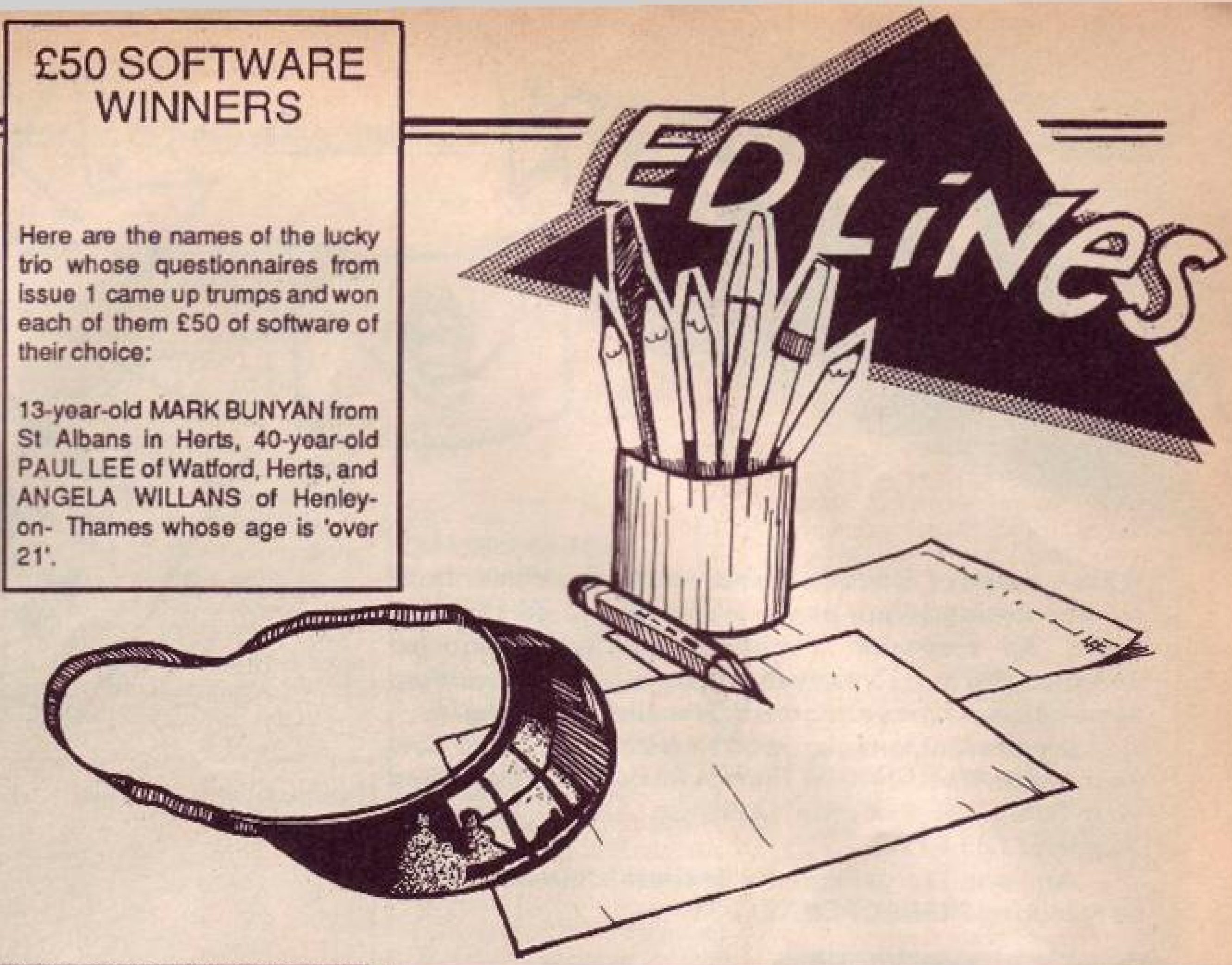
Sackfuls of cartoons have been arriving at AA Headquarters over the past few weeks. It's been encouraging, to say the least. Some of them are very good indeed and you can appreciate them in this month's pages.

We'd still like even more – so keep those quills to the drawing board and those witty ideas flowing. Put the end result in a envelope and send it post haste to: *Cartoons, Amstrad Action, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PS.*

Don't forget that as well as fame there could be cash and even regular work for AA.



BY PAUL GILL



Mystery Reader – Part 3

Huge increases in sales have been reported by our spies in the Somerton area. Issue 3 has been purchased by at least FOUR people. But the mystery continues. Who are these people? When and how will they make themselves known to us? One theory is that Bob Wade bought the lot, just to cheer the rest of us up. But that's been discounted – he's far too mean.

So come on you Somerset Arnoldians! Show some loyalty, some AA Team spirit. Write to us, make your presence felt – we're dying to hear from you.

£50 SOFTWARE WINNERS

Here are the names of the lucky trio whose questionnaires from issue 1 came up trumps and won each of them £50 of software of their choice:

13-year-old MARK BUNYAN from St Albans in Herts, 40-year-old PAUL LEE of Watford, Herts, and ANGELA WILLANS of Henley-on- Thames whose age is 'over 21'.

Competition Winners

The Hewson and PSS competitions in the November issue were both extremely popular. Not surprising given the juicy goods up for grabs. Once again Di did the honours – so the lucky hundred printed below have her to thank as well as Lady Luck. And, of course, their own intelligence, imagination, wit etc.

Dragontorc/ Southern Belle

S. Doyle, Bloxwich: **Chris Browning**, Ewell, Surrey: **M.G. Barker**, Thurso: **Kang Wong**, Coventry: **R. McDonald**, Slough: **M.D. Sims**, Ingatestone, Essex: **Allan Price**, Bramley, Leeds: **Lawrence Smith**, Newport, Gwent: **A. Gillespie**, Bushmills: **J. Clement**, Hertford: **Mark Brewer**, Great Yarmouth: **James Pugh**, Salford: **Michael Stirling**, Dundee: **Jon Harding**, Wantage: **Steven Warne**, Leicester: **J. Hyde**, Kelvedon, Essex: **Karl Steanson**, Thirsk: **Mark Royster**, Bury: **Stuart Hutchinson**, Reading: **Mark Connor**, Leeds: **P. Hewins**, Cambridge: **Peter Clark**, Glasgow: **Neil Yardley**, Crawley: **Richard Taylor**, Wirral, Merseyside: **Mark Postle-Hacon**, Plymouth: **Miss D.L. Bainbridge**, Leeds: **D. Ratcliffe**, Surbiton, Surrey: **Claire Turner**, Peterborough: **S. Clarke**, Rugby: **T. Trimmins**, Woking: **James McCreade**, Stevenston, Ayrshire: **Tony Wallis**, Sheffield: **R. Berwick**, Guildford: **J.E. White**, Ministry of Defence, London: **Richard Clarke**, Stafford: **A. Fothergill**, Bristol: **Semin Malde**, Guildford: **M. Davies**, Hatfield, Herts: **J.S. Gandy**, Sheffield: **Mark Addison**, Margate: **C. McCleod**, Elemsthorpe, Leicestershire: **K. O'Connor**, Bacup, Lancs: **R. Marshall**, Redcar, Cleveland: **M. Hussain**, London: **Michael Ridge**, Wigan: **Mrs. J.Ellis**, Huddersfield: **Jack Parker**, Cramlington: **A.J. Prigg**, Exeter: **R. Hemmings**, Swindon: **N. Robertson**, Clackmannan

Macadam Bumper/ The Covenant

D. J. Wilson, Stoke-on-Trent: **Mark Sutton**, Swansea: **Andrew Duff**, Tain: **Andrew Cunningham**, Sunderland: **Darren Timmins**, Dudley: **Michael Dunse**, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian: **P. Corsar**, Clackmannan, Scotland: **B. Jones**, Basingstoke: **Shaun Holt**, Ramsbottom: **C. Morgan**, Swansea: **Michael Clark**, Newtongrange: **Ian Jackson**, Wolverhampton: **J.F. Conybeare**, Bridgend: **Anthony Knife**, Romford: **M.R. Parashchar**, Littleborough, Lancs: **D.M. White**, Manchester: **Billy Watson**, South Quensferry, Scotland: **Michael J. Hart**, Birmingham: **Peter White**, Sheffield: **Mr J.S. Gandy**, Sheffield: **John Walker**, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire: **Stewart Hackley**, Poynton, Cheshire: **James Bastow**, London SW1: **Ole Kristensen**, Hvidovre, Denmark: **Stewart Eves**, Isleworth, Middlesex: **Damian Barrow**, Adlington, Nr. Chorley: **D. Stevens**, London NW6: **Alan Hoad**, Coulsdon, Surrey: **Stephen Turner**, Belvedere, Kent: **J.J. Howat**, London SE18: **Mark Thomas**, Penygraig, Rhondda: **Andrew Robinson**, Ellesmere Port: **Emma Mier**, Chell, Staffs: **N. Shayler**, Dunstable: **Tom McFarlane**, Bicester: **I.T. Mathie**, Dunstable: **Matthew Hadfield**, Sidcup: **William Freeland**, Dalkeith, Midlothian: **Anthony Morrey**, Ruislip: **Gerry Hughes**, Cranleigh: **J. E. Hyde**, Colchester: **J.M. Crawford**, Tiverton: **Luke Watson**, Hornsea, North Humberside: **K.Seymour**, Heathfield, East Sussex: **R. McClenaghan**, Liverpool: **G. Graham**, Cardiff: **C.G. Martin**, Plymouth: **M.R. Tallis**, Timperley, Cheshire: **P.J. Bertram**, BFPO 801: **P. Straker**, Olney, Bucks

Wanted – Amstrad buff

Amstrad Action is looking for an Arnold enthusiast to join the team early in the new year.

The person we're looking for is likely to be something of a boffin, with a really thorough knowledge of the Amstrad's hardware and software, and absolutely must be ready and willing to lend a hand in anything from making tea to writing The Mastergame review. He – or she – will be familiar with both games and serious software, since he – or she – will have to write somereviews of software in both these areas. Knowledge of the serious side of things is particularly desirable.

One thing you must be able to do to be seriously considered is to write well and clearly. If you can also manage a spot of wit now and again, so much the better.

The job, of course, will be based here at AA GHQ in dear old Somerton. So one thing you need to consider is whether you would like to live in a small country town, with little in the way of nightlife or public transport. You don't have to be a nature lover, but it might help.

A few final points: you must be at least 18 years old, of sound mind and body and be able to type with at least two fingers.

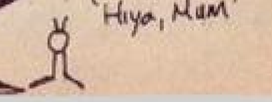
If you think you could fit that rigorous bill, then apply in the following manner: send a letter giving personal details, a photograph if possible, a c.v. and typewritten samples of a games review and a serious software review to: *The Editor, Amstrad Action, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PS.*

Applications should arrive by January 13th.

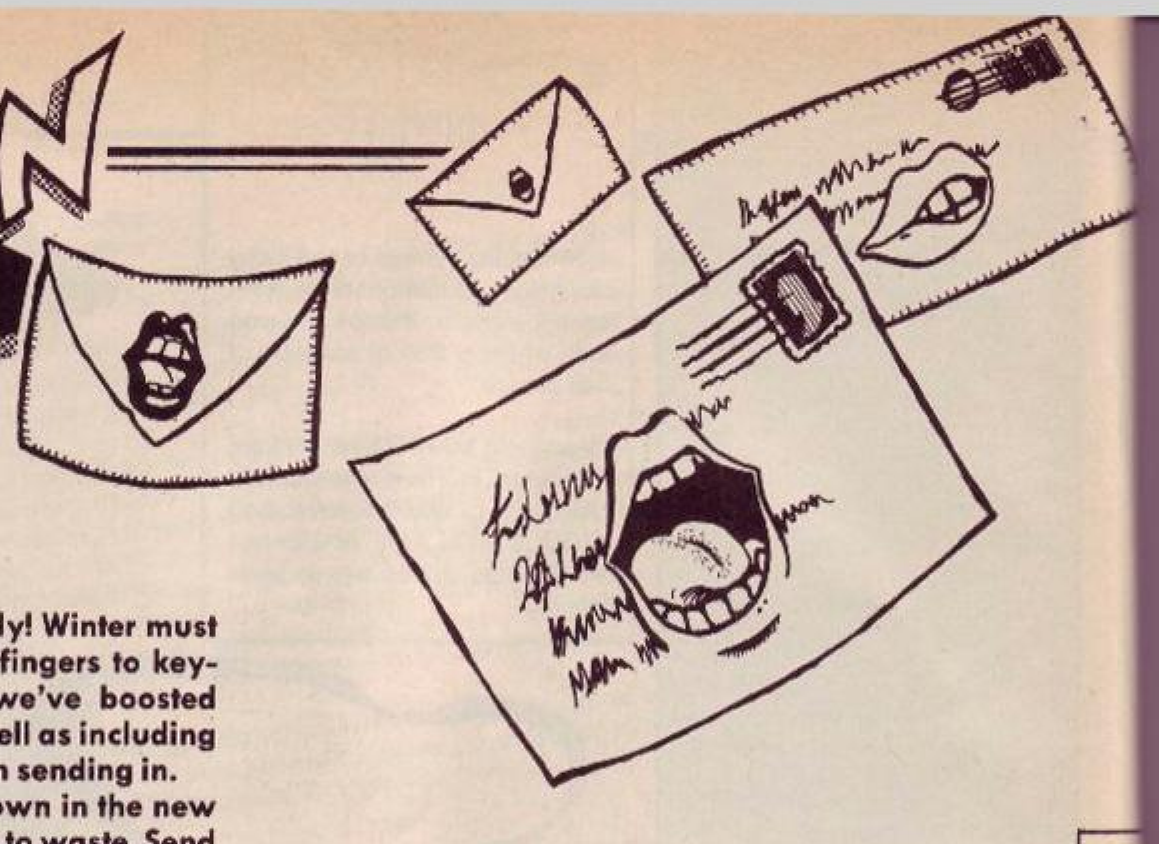
What another show!

Only last month we were telling you about the good time had by all at the first Amstrad show in October. Now we're reminding you that if you're in the vicinity of Hammersmith's Novotel, in London, on January 11th and 12th, you could call in at the second one.

We'll be there again, with copies of the February issue hot from the over-worked presses, so come along and say hello. Or anything else you want to say.



Re-ACTION



What a massive mailbag we've had lately! Winter must set you itching to put pen to paper and fingers to keyboard. As a special Yuletide present we've boosted ReAction to a massive seven pages, as well as including some of those crazy cartoons you've been sending in.

If you want to make your views known in the new year, get down to it NOW! There is no time to waste. Send your letters to: *ReAction, Amstrad Action, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PS.*

And don't forget that the liveliest letter-writers will be receiving FREE SOFTWARE!

Only connect

I took up your communications package offer in Issue 2 and I am writing to say how impressed I am – at least until the phone bill arrives. There is so much information and fun to be gained from some of the bulletin boards.

A suggestion: why doesn't AA do its own bulletin board? What a way to communicate with your readers! It would not only complement your superb magazine, but also enable fellow readers to contact each other easily.

Also, in Issue 3 Ken Swain of Preston managed to transfer *Knight Lore* from tape to disc, but it wouldn't run. Ken, try this: type in, save as "Knight" and run

```
10 Memory &1FFF
20 Load "Knight.bin"
30 Poke &113B,1: Poke &1000,48: Poke &1148,&C3
40 Call &1104: CLOSEIN: Call &114B
```

This assumes that on transfer your files names are Knight.Bin and 0.Bin.

S.R. Dunn
Cookham, Berks

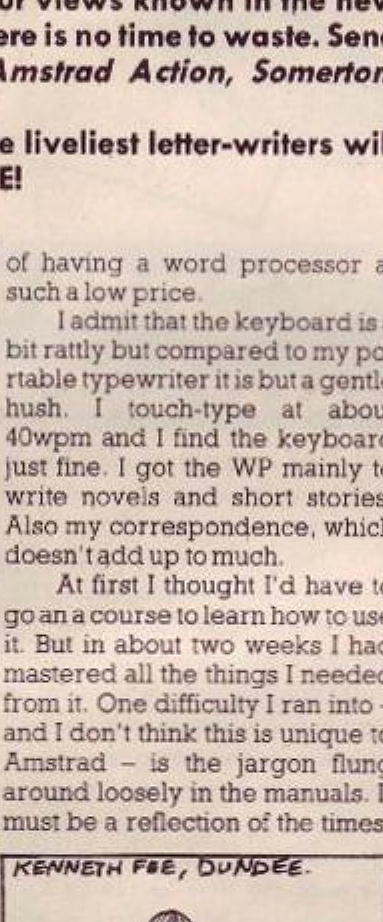
We're investigating the possibility of setting up our own bulletin board. I'm sure Ken Swain will be most grateful for the help.

Faint praise

I am a bit disappointed in James Hartley's checkout of Amstrad's newest all-in-one PCW8256, his faint praises would seem like the kiss of death to me. Had I not gone out and bought one on the strength of last month's review I would never have known the joys of having a word processor at such a low price.

I admit that the keyboard is a bit rattly but compared to my portable typewriter it is but a gentle hush. I touch-type at about 40wpm and I find the keyboard just fine. I got the WP mainly to write novels and short stories. Also my correspondence, which doesn't add up to much.

At first I thought I'd have to go an a course to learn how to use it. But in about two weeks I had mastered all the things I needed from it. One difficulty I ran into – and I don't think this is unique to Amstrad – is the jargon flung around loosely in the manuals. It must be a reflection of the times,



as this is also prevalent in your magazine. Sometimes it's incomprehensible, as if you're trying to say everything in machine code.

During the latter part of my working life I programmed with COBOL. Now it looks as if I have to use BASIC with my PCW, although the blurb says COBOL is available. Anyway, after COBOL, BASIC seems a gimmicky thing and you long to go back to the simplicity – if long-winded – of COBOL. Well, your English phrases in the magazine are very gimmicky and I wonder if you don't long to go back to plain understandable English once in a while.

But I guess you are aiming at the young games players. So you are feeding them the latest in computerese so they can be intelligible to each other.

Sorry to have digressed a bit, but at 69 I felt an opinion rising within me that had to be heard. In any case I find the PCW8256 a great machine.

J.Moffat
Angmering, Sussex

James Hartley was a little on the lukewarm side, and I think he might now be a little more enthusiastic about thte PCW8256.

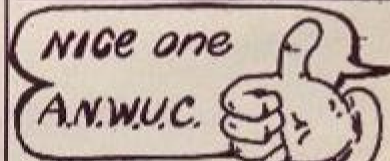
We try to cater for every Amstrad owner, not just the younger games players, and we do try to avoid the use of excessive jargon. Obviously, we're not always successful.

North West users

On reading your latest issue of Amstrad Action I noticed a letter from Alan of Worthing – *Club Request*. We are writing to ask if you could give our club a mention.

We are based in Manchester and cover the North West, but have now affiliated with severral European Amstrad Users clubs. Our membership fee is only £5 a year for which members receive a monthly newsletter, an updated database list, posters etc. The club meets every Wednesday evening from 7 till 9. If any readers would like to know more about the A.N.W.U.C. please send a s.a.e. for full details to: 41 Millwall Close, Gorton, Manchester M18 8LL.

P Clarke (sec.)
C Heyliger (pres.)



That's the life

One day I went down to the newsagent fellow freaks, and what did I see? A

new fabulous mag thats what, and no prize for guessing my next move, I promtly laid 30 Dkr. on the table (about £2.50!) and demanded my copy. And I was not disapointed, 100 pages of excellent reviews and silly picture (of the staff) I haven't had so much joy in a long time. Then, after having swallowed 91% of this fabulous printing I saw something wonderful (end of quotation) two games from Beyond at half price!

Well no price for guessing my next move. I ordered both. And then: The Long Wait (think I'll write a book about it, actually I spent my entire holiday waiting, by the way, nice title isn't it) I gave up a forthnigt later and fell into my worst depression yet (maybe it was due to the fact that I has to start school again) and I haven't pulled myselft together to write a very nasty letter to you before now (it is horrible just to read it unless you fancy puzzles like guess which word).

Well, down to the serious stuff. As you might have figured out in you mighty omniscience (nice word, wish we had someting like omniscience in Denmark (political joke; moderate laughter from all non-conservatives please)) I have not rerceived anything yet, and as you might have

The review review

I like the way you keep doing your ace reviews of software and hardware, so I've compiled my own review on you:

GRAPHICS 74%: Great illustrations and covers, not forgetting Toot. Lots of humour.

SONICS 80%: It sounds great to my friends and the pages make a nice sound.

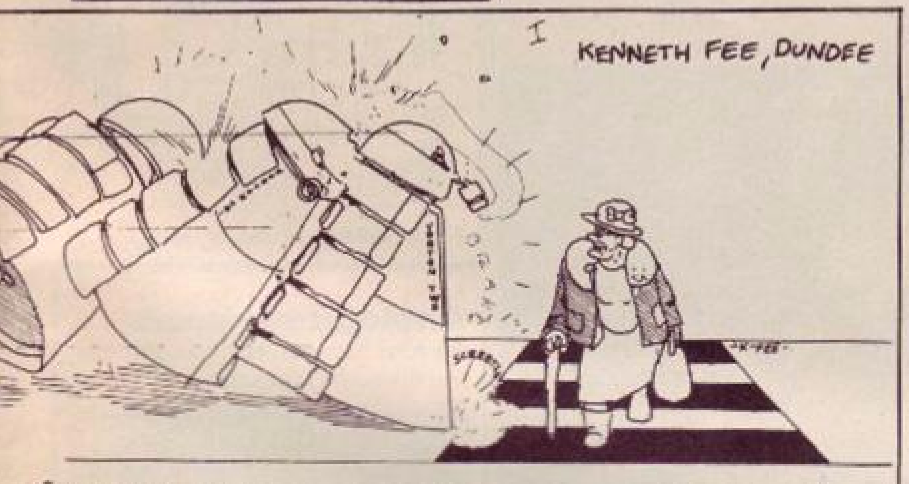
GRAB FACTOR 91%: It grabbed me straight away after the cyclops eye hypnotised me.

STAYING POWER 87%: I'll stay with you (probably due to my subscription) and so will a lot of people.

MY RATING 90%: Best magazine out for the Arnold.

Donald Sharkey
Scunthorpe

Great review, Donald. You say the nicest things – even if they are only the truth.



"THE SPEED THESE YOUNG RUFFIANS DRIVE AT THESE DAYS!"

Unrepentant

I missed Issue 2 of Amstrad Action but on reading ReAction I noticed in two letters from a Mr. Gareth Knight of Manchester and a Mr. Gerald Earnshaw of Warrington that they disagreed with my views of your magazine. Well I don't really care. Everyone is entitled to their own views. Did Churchill ask Hitler for advice on D-Day 1944? No he didn't.

Anyway, that's not the reason that I write to you again. The reason is that in my view Amstrad Action is beginning to improve. But compared to Computing With the Amstrad and Amstrad Computer User your magazine has still room to be improved.

It needs colour. All you have to do is to pick up a copy of ACU in your left hand a copy of AA in your right and the difference is noticeable.

I think that the main thing that put me off your first edition was the front cover which made it look like a magazine devoted to games and turning my good friend Arnold into a Spectrum. This is something I would never want to see. I use an Amstrad CPC 464 with dual-disc system (DD-1 and FD-1) and this type of set up has been proved by many small businesses as a powerful tool and a great aid to their business.

Not only do I play games like *Beach Head* which work extremely well, but I use my Amstrad for word processing and databases, which prove to be powerful things. All Amstrad computers and peripherals are very well-made and very reliable. Amstrad is the only computer company which hasn't had a failed product and is also the only company that has got its products right first time.

Another good point in your favour is that you do review other software apart from games, which seem to dominate many magazines today, e.g. on page 22 of Issue 3 you have reviewed three word processors and each review gives a good, condensed and easy-to-understand set-out of how each one operates. This is good because you do this and also review games.

The only other thing that I would personally find interesting is the occasional disc utility or general disc information.

Well, I think that covered it and, believe it or not, I have made a subscription to AA!

D. Butterworth
Lymington, Hants.

I did it, D. Butterworth. I picked up a December copy of ACU in my left hand and a December copy of AA in my right. And do you know what I discovered after I put them down and looked through them? AA had two more full-colour pages than ACU! Of course we'd love to use more colour, but it's very expensive and we're still very poor. But we'll do our best.



noticed if this letter isn't filed vertically iin the circular filing cabinet at you feet. I have sent youu a photocopy of a receipt as proff of "purchase", or you can just check your books and see that you have got £11 more than ypou should (the last pound is postage). Then please send me my game (I have heard the sad news, *Shadowfire* was the one I was most anxious about) and the remaining money? I suggest you send me a piece of software instead, because it isn't exactly cheap to send money overseas. How about something from your subscription offer? It just has to be 664 compatible.

Oh, I am glad you mentioned it, the 664. The machine likely to receive The Hot Potato of The Year Award, the machine that Alan M. Sugar in his great wisdom murdered after only four months, now wouldn't it be wise of him to bury the body before anyone finds out? he thinks not, but Mr. A.M.S., I am absolutely positive that that if you do not do something immediately, and it might be too late already, you have lost hundreds of potential costumers, and the result will be, if you do not drop that ultra business oriented policy in favour of a more user-friendly one, you will go down with as loud a bang as the 664 did. Mr. A surely can't be described as a fast-thinking man, with the relatively few 664 owners around he could do some very rewarding PR work, but no.

Well, back to the point. My software. My teacher of physics insists that I shall always find some sources of error. Well apart from your great imbecility I see only one, the Danish mail sevice. They won't allow me to write a message on thie form when I send money to England, they say it is because the form will be transferred into a cheque, and you will never weven see it. I don't know if I believe them – the ones to blame is probably you. I don't know if I believe anything from the people who gave *Centre Court* an overall rating of more than 11%. It is simpply awful, and it crashes now and then even though it is partly written in BASIC, but that's the life.

This is the small print bit which says everything in this letter isn't copyright Klaus Henning Sorensen etc. etc. The point is, if you want to print part of this letter in your magg, I'll be only too happy to let you, so hereby, you have permission, well it is only fair.

Give my regards to The Pilgim, I always liked muslims.

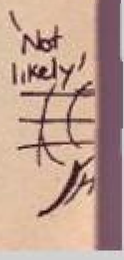
By the way, good luck with the mag, don't go bankrupt before I get my software.

Sorry about the bad spelling, I am only Danish.

Klaus Henning Sorensen
Denmark (the pimple on Germany, remember)

I hope you don't mind us printing your letter almost completely unaltered, Klaus. We though the Amstrad-owning public deserved to get the full flavour of it. It's not really our fault, though. About the software I mean. If a game is delayed there's not much we can do to speed it on its way. Believe me, please believe me, when I say that we would never have offered certain games if we'd thought they would take so long to appear. Buy now, anyway, you should have received Spy v. Spy *which, I think you'll admit, has been well worth the wait. I apologise for being unable to put a diagonal line through the 'o' in your name. But that's the life.*





Paranoid plea

Tell me it isn't true! Please tell me that the 'mega map' you're working on is not *Nonterraqueous*. It can't be. When I read your review of *Nonterraqueous* in issue 1 of AA I went out and bought a copy. Then, when I read your £300 challenge I decided to have a go at mapping it. After hours of hard work and sweat I managed to finish it (there's even a blood stain on it somewhere). Now I read in Issue 2 that deep within the bowels of AA HQ a 'monster' game is being mapped. Is this some other game? Am I just paranoid? Or has Lady Luck really smacked me in the mouth with her handbag this time?

Anyway, here it is. There's the map, playing tips, a loader program that gives infinite lives and a list of pokes for redefining the keys. Was this all for nothing? I hope not. I'm sure you can use some of it. What I would really like is to get my hands on some of that £300.

Please let me know if I've wasted my time. Don't make me wait for Issue 3.

Dean Adam
Cardiff

Yes, Dean, you're just a normal paranoid mapster. Look at the Cheat Mode pages and gaze on the fruits of your labours. That gorgeous loot could still be yours. Sorry we made you wait till Issue 3, though.

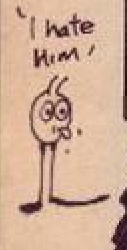
An artist writes

Well done on producing such a brilliant magazine!! Unlike the magazine I usually get – Computer and Video Games – I am not absolutely bored with the articles, but have read every word of them, I hope you keep up such good interviews. And the competitions – SUPER ULTRA MAGNIFICENT. I am entering all of them including the year's subscription.

Alas I must grumble. Please advise Trevor Gilham to take more care over his drawings. And finally you couldn't possibly make the reviews section more organized?

Leon Orr
Belfast

Advise? You think 'Trev' listens to advice? He doesn't even listen to Toot.





Excuses, excuses

Looking through the magazine rack of my local newsagent, I saw a new publication called Amstrad Action. After reading through, I noted that you reviewed one of my conversions for the Amstrad, namely, *3D Time-Trek*, published by Anirog. After the poor review comments you gave it, I feel I must state that this is a direct conversion and I had to work to set specification, thus the resulting factor is that the CBM-64, VIC-20, Spectrum versions are no better.

Besides that, it's a great mag, and watch out for a game I am working on at the moment which I am writing on my ideas and am set to no spec. It's called *Supa-Nova* and even you may be surprised by it.

Stefan Walker
Selston, Notts.

It takes a pretty ace game to surprise us Stefan, so you'd better get it right – especially when you consider what happens to programmers who promise but don't deliver...

Amstradless

I would like to congratulate you on your new superb magazine. It's brightened my days up no end. You see as yet I don't own any kind of Amstrad model, but I'm hoping I will by Christmas. Anyway I've been for a while in two minds to choose either an Amstrad or another computer system (which shall remain nameless!), but AA has persuaded me towards the Amstrad, due to your 'zines format, style etc. All the other computer 'zines are boring and pathetic, even so are some other Amstrad 'zines I've bought, but I won't be a name-dropper, but I'll just say Amstrad Computer User is a list-full 'zine and not a nice kind of reading. Oh yes, your reviews look most accurate and I find this very assuring. Hopefully if I get an 'Arnold' I'll subscribe to AA, so don't run out of that free software stock! One last word – where can I get a copy of AA 1 please?!?

Anthony Dickinson
Featherstone, West Yorkshire

You can get a copy of Issue 1 by sending us a postal order or a cheque for £1.35. What, though, is a 'zine'?

Winning style

Thank you for a new and exciting mag which took me by surprise and has so far made very good reading the past two months – I will look forward to reading it every month.

I must say the way it has been put together is very good (you have a winning style) and for people like myself who haven't had a computer before and don't go in for pages of listings which take hours to type in (I only use one finger) and never seem to work afterwards anyway. The Pilgrim has made his mark on me with his pages and I will always be a follower of his.

Please keep up the good work as we are not all computer wizards! Some of us are still just fledglings trying to learn the art.

Michael Worth
Portsmouth

Yahoo

You've done it! Yahoo! Brill! Congrats!

Why all this euphoria? Well, you've followed an excellent first issue with a superb No.2 of course. And there's all the signs of getting better as time goes on. Well done.

I'm pleased to hear of your plans to provide an indication of programs' compatability for the 6128 and 664 as well as the 464. I know there are many readers who would welcome such information. I know that I am not the only one to take a risk with a 464 game, hoping it would work on my 6128, only to find it doesn't! Although a risk that recently paid off was the highly addictive *Boulderdash* – please find enclosed my entry for the High Scores table.

I'd like to thank whoever I spoke to on the telephone last week for help on my loading problems with the *Lords of Midnight*. It was very reassuring to find such friendly people and a genuine willingness to help, especially as it was after 5pm on a Friday! So, whoever it was thanks very much.

John Cussen
Portsmouth

ROY KAY, WIRRAL.





FROM GRAHAM GRIFF, PAIGNTON.

Analogically yours

Re your recent remarks concerning the review of software.

Might I point out that if one buys a car, let us say a Ford Granada, one does not say, "How does it compare with other Ford Granadas," one says, "How does it compare with a Volvo, Vauxhall or Fiat!"

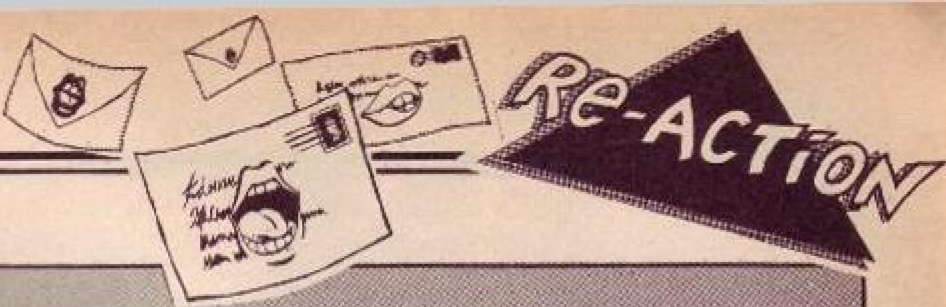
Likewise if you review a game that is obviously inferior to the Commodore version, then you should say so! To judge games only as an Amstrad game is say to software houses, "Don't worry if it's simply a cheap and nasty, revamped Spectrum game, with no thought or use given to the Amstrad's extra memory, graphics and sound, because we won't say anything that compares it to other machine versions.!"

It might interest you to know as an example, that I have successfully brought a case against US Gold under the Trade Descriptions Act, because their Amstrad *Beachhead* was not remotely like the screen shot on the cassette. Does that prove a point? In all other respects your magazine is excellent!

Mr P Long
Bristol

While I can see your point, Mr. Long, I don't really agree with it. Surely the analogy of the cars works better if you're comparing hardware? A Ford Granada is obviously bigger, faster, more comfortable than a Mini. But it also costs a lot more and a direct comparison of the two wouldn't really help anyone very much. That doesn't mean to say that we'll let software houses get away with shoddy conversions, any more







than you'll let them get away with shoddy adverts.

Schizoid Pilgrim

I have reason to believe that 'The Pilgrim' is in fact two people – either that or he is schizophrenic. The clue that lead me to this horrifying conclusion was dropped in the November issue.

On page 83 at the end of the article on transferring adventures from tape to disc the writer wrote 'Next month, we'll show you how to transfer *Robin of Sherwood* to disc – a boon because it's a brilliant game...'

However, a few pages previously The Pilgrim described the same game as 'really rather lacking in state-of-the-art programming techniques' and says that it is 'not much better than the games we were all playing two years ago'.

I can hardly believe that the same person would write two such opposing statements and so could you tell us who is/are The Pilgrim(s)!

Anthony Brady
Sittingbourne, Kent

'Tis a fair cop. We can only hope that he/they doesn't/don't fragment even further. We can just about cope with a personality split just two ways, but one person giving three – or more – different opinions would be too much. But we still can't tell you who is/are/will be The Pilgrim(s).





Transfer request

This is a letter from an Amstrad user written on an Amstrad machine to the letters page of an Amstrad magazine run by... Well, I won't go any further with that. I won't bother with the usual great mag, keep up the good work etc. as I don't want to sound like a creep. Well, maybe I am.

But, seriously, folks a, few points which I feel should be made, not about the mag (see above) but about software in general. Firstly I agree with the letter from P J E Marshall, Swindon about software compatability of the 664/6128 type. If not for an understanding shop I would be the cost of *Sorcery* out, as it will not run on my machine, as a phone call to Virgin (after the fact) proved. This is not the only such program as for instance the loader part (first) of *Fist* uses disc memory space, so I still have to load it from cassette.

Secondly, I appreciate that software publishers want to stop unauthorised copies of their programs and as such are not very helpful as to transferring their programs to disc, but they will have to face the fact that sooner or later the cassette will die and discs of whatever format will be the medium to use.

Some suppliers are very good (Tasman, Cambell etc.) and provide instructions or write their programs so that if you do transfer to disc then anything saved or loaded will save or load to disc not cassette. This is very much a problem with adventures. I have transferred several to disc with very little prolem but when I come to save a game up comes the "Press play and rec. then any key." Not a great help if the game loads in 10 or 12 seconds. Then you have to wait mins. to load in your position. One possible answer would be not to write specific cassette routines as is done in *Mordon's Quest*, (thank you Melbourne House), or put dual save/load routines for disc users. I sometimes think that software houses care more for their profits than for the customers. Software houses please note that if you do not provide the functions that your customers want then you can imagine what will happen. Also please can they clarify what machine their programs are for as some labelled 464 will run on 664/6128 and some won't and not every shop will exchange programs. We're back to the piracy aspect again. So if anybody has any further comments on this subject (I'm not the only one surely) then let's hear from you. If you don't voice your opinions then nobody will take notice, and software houses please note – we are not all sat at our machines in striped shirts and eye patches.

Steve Brokenshire
Brigg, South Humberside

We agree that the future lies in discs, and the sooner that you can transfer programs from tape without fuss, the better. Unfortunately, not every software house seees it like that. But pretty soon we hope to run a piece on making tape-to-disc transfer much easier.

We too wish the software houses would clearly indicate if software is compatible with all three machines. Until they do, we'll be testing programs ourselves.



It gets better

Having today bought the second issue of AA I can only say that it's a great improvement over issue one, which was obviously a rush job.

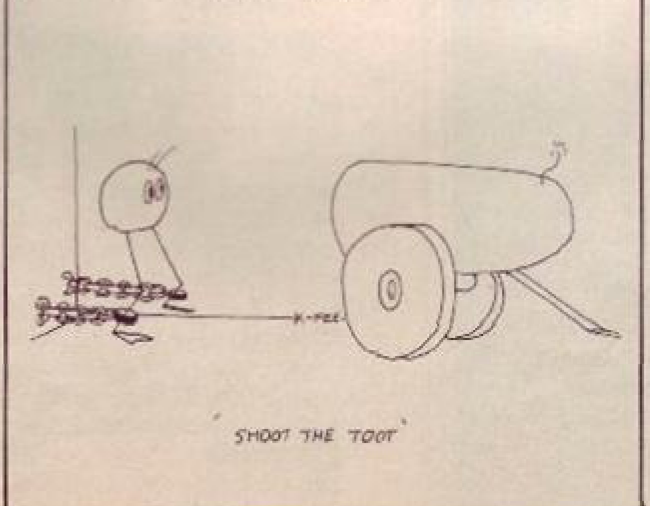
Your own survey and one in Amstrad User show that a large number of Amstrad owners are in the "mature" bracket. I feel that your magazine is coping well with this need to please the younger readers and us older gamesters.

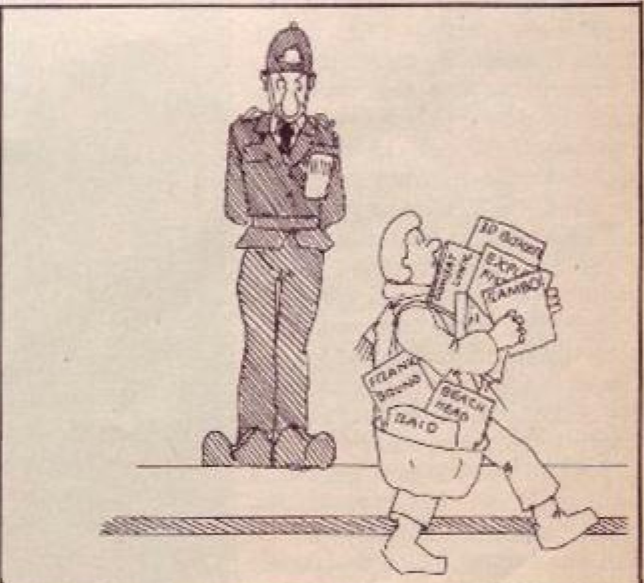
Finally I am pleased to see that you have decided to include listings in future issues. I know some people are hotly against listings but I suspect they only use their computers to play games. Amstrad Basic is capable of producing some good games, and listings help the beginner to see how programs can be written. Most people should be able to program moderately well and I strongly feel it is wrong to have a computer without learning to program. Anyway what's wrong with a free game or utility whether in Basic or code?

John Wright
Selston, Notts

Yes, it certainly was a rush. And things are still pretty hectic. We're glad you approve of listings, although we don't think there should be any obligation on people to do anything profound with their Arnolds. If you just want to use what's already available, what's the harm?

KENNETH FEE, DUNDEE.





Subs sorrow

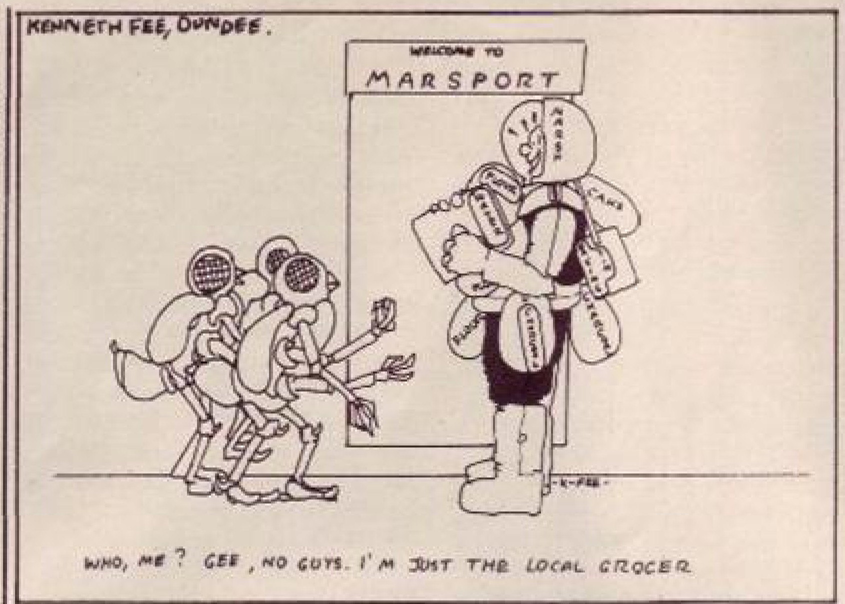
Although your magazine is terrific, and I've mentioned this to many people on Prestel, I'm a little disappointed that I still haven't received my two free games, (on receipt of my subscription) and the two games I ordered – *Shadowfire* and *Spy v Spy* for £9.95. Also please give me more info on how to transfer from tape to disc. I can find out everything that's on a disc or tape using *The Knife* by Aries, but how I can decipher which address location goes where is beyond me.

Keep up the good work, but please send me my tapes very soon – or I shall cry and then my Arnold will blow up with the increased moisture input. And you wouldn't like that would you? Incidentally I run a business and my accounts are on a program called *Money Manager*, and this caters for such a wide variety of needs at under £20.00. I feel it must be value for money and would appreciate a write-up on it.

Must go now as I heard the postman – I don't suppose it's my tapes?

A J Simmonds
Ashford, Kent

I hope it was your tapes. There's not much I can do but give yet another humble, grovelling, sickly apology for the delay.



Anti-Type-ins

Having finally chosen to stick with AA I thought I'd write in to say how good I think it is. I've seen all four Amstrad mags but knew that I couldn't afford to fork out four quid a month to have them all. So ultimately it boiled down to AA, which I find if not totally original at least the clearest and most enjoyable available.

Still, I must agree with Ian Ridley that you should cut out the program listings. If I wanted that kind of stuff I would have stayed with those certain other magazines. One listing a month may not be much, but what else could that page be put to? Please keep it out. But, whatever you do, don't cut down on the number of games you review. You manage a good selection at the present time and a page for the AA raves is just enough to cover the game in depth. One extra point would be a special section devoted to previews of forthcoming games. But if you keep the standard as high as it is I will be quite happy.

Even with the free games the subscription is too high for me and I think I will stick to the faithful old newsagent. Keep on turning out the issues and may your joysticks never crumble.

David Pearson
Nuneaton

Listings look as though they're going to take up permanent residence in these pages, David, mainly because most people seem to like them. But don't worry – they're never going to monopolise space. Why don't you give one a go? You might even like it. Reviews of new software will always be a major part of AA. Rest assured that we'll review any game we can get our hands on, and that the big ones will get big coverage.



Mumbo-jumbo

Amstrad Action is the only magazine (computer or otherwise) that I subscribe to, so I am obviously impressed. However I have several comments to make which will hopefully improve and/or preserve the state of the magazine.

First and foremost, I do NOT wish to see program listings or pages of technical mumbo-jumbo filling valuable space in "our" magazine. The programs will inevitably be third-rate and such "technical information" is often incomprehensible.

Secondly, the presentation of AA could be improved with more generous use of colour (especially for screen shots) and the use of slightly larger print – the current size gives me eye-strain!

Finally, although the special offers in Issue 1 were remarkably generous, it is appalling that you offered games for sale that were nowhere near ready for release, and even offered a product that wasn't even out of the development stage – i.e. *Shadowfire*!

After all that it may seem difficult to believe, but I really do like AA; in fact I feel it is easily the best magazine dedicated to Amstrad users on the market; so please keep up the good work and don't take offense from a fussy *!?* like myself!!

N D Rijke
Newbury, Berkshire

PS There is nothing wrong with Liberal Party broadcasts – such comments should be left to Messrs Kinnock and Thatcher!! (P.22 Issue No.2).

I don't think we've printed any technical mumbo-jumbo yet. All our articles on serious software have been aimed at informing rather than bamboozling readers, and I think we've succeeded.

We too would like to use more colour. Ideally, there would be colour on every page. But then we'd have to charge about £10 an issue, which seems a little steep.

As for the games in our offers, we were convinced they would be finished in good time to go out to readers. Unfortunately, we were wrong and so it's time for yet another grovelling, hand-wringing etc. apology.

Their finest hour

By the summer of 1940 Hitler's army had invaded and occupied much of Poland and all of Norway, Holland, Belgium and the best part of France. We stood alone. Churchill said (18 June 1940), 'Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free...'

Hitler planned to invade England that year for which he needed air superiority. He did not get it because the RAF won the Battle of Britain that summer, and the invasion was postponed indefinitely leading eventually to his losing the war.

We ought not to forget our debt to the RAF, and what better way to remember it than in a game of skill which reminds us of an important episode in our lives, and also teaches us something about handling resources?

A S Martin
Ilkeston, Derbyshire

I couldn't agree more when you say that we not to forget the Battle of Britain. But, 'what better way to remember it than in a game of skill'? There must be less flippant ways of reminding people of the importance of such an event. I don't object to Battle of Britain as a game, but that's all it is – a game, which few people will bother to relate in any serious way to the year 1940.

Arnold the linguist

Having just taken a 6128 out on H.P with £30 deposit (and a bit of a battle of words with the dealer



who said I should take a 464 or 664 instead), I am just wondering if there are any other languages available for Arnie here. It's my first computer and I want to put it through extensive usage of various languages. I've already learned a good deal of BASIC on probably everyone else's computer and I'm bored to bits using it. Is there a PASCAL out there – cheap – or even a form of COBOL?

I'm not into games, but after reading somewhere else about the up-and-coming *Scooby Doo* I may just buy a few.

With my 6128 having a disc, I want to buy the cheaper tape-based games. Can you recommend a tape recorder that is compatible with Arnie?

I look forward to more of the competitions and will probably in the near future take out a subscription.

Thomas Hardy
Belfast

There certainly are alternative languages available for Arnold – you get one of them, Logo, with the machine. Pascal is also on the market and there are various versions of Forth. We hope to give some idea of the linguistic options open to Arnoldians in future issues.

Most computer-compatible tape recorders will work with Amstrads. It's a question of how much money you want to pay. Don't forget you'll need a lead and that it's as well to get a recorder with a remote socket.

More opinions?

I think Amstrad Action is THE best Magazine for the Amstrad, but I do have one minor quibble. I think that the reviewing section is great, with the second opinion, and I now read that you are introducing even more. But what about the adventure review columns? In these we have to be content with one opinion, and as tastes in adventure games vary enormously I think a second and even third opinion should be included. I also think that adventures should have their separate top 20 chart, as well as being included in the other charts.

I also have a query. I am wondering if you run a back issue service, as I missed out on Issue 1, and am desperate for a copy, as many hospitalised newsagents know. And I disagree with Andrew Bowden. Toot does not look like a golf ball on stilts, more like a ping pong ball balancing on matches.

Mark White
Cork, Eire

You have to understand, Mark, that the Pilgrim is very jealous of his position and might not take kindly to other folk muscling in on his column. I'm trying to persuade him to give other voices a hearing, and I think I might soon have some success.

Moaning Minnies

Will they ever stop!? MOAN, MOAN, MOAN, MOAN, MOAN!!! Is that all they do?

'Who?', I hear you asking. CPC 664 owners, that's who. Every time I pick up a computer magazine they are there, lurking in the pages, just waiting for a chance to jump out at you and have a good moan.

Well it's about time they stopped. I can understanf their complaint, but do they think they are the only ones who have been disappointed?

Because they are not.

Q. Did you hear CPC464 owners moaning because they missed £100 of free software.

A. NO!

Q. Did you hear CPC464 owners moaning when the 664 was introduced?

A. NO!

Q. Have you heard CPC 464 owners moan because their machines have been de-valued by £40 0vernight?

A. NO!

So come on all you 664 owners, you've had your moan, now it's time to enjoy your computer. After all there is some great software around and some even better magazines to support you – i.e. AA.

Thanks for a good mag.

Frank A. Brammer
Clwyd, North Wales

That's tough talk, Frank. I wager you get a lot of flak from those 664 owners very soon now.

Scrumpy spitting

In answer to your "WEST COUNTRY BLUES" comment in the November issue (page 9), I am writing to inform you that you are not alone in being the only Amstrad owners in the area. I am a proud owner of an Amstrad CPC464 complete with disc drive and printer (Centronics GLP). Also as you can see from the address I am within scrumpy spitting distance of your fair abode as well. I am ashamed to admit that I have been to Somerton on hundreds of occassions but have never seen your place. Perhaps the gods have been kind to me and have spared me this agony. However it is perfectly clear to me , being the genius that I am, that you are in dire need of help. (I know where the good scrumpy farms are!!!). I happen to be a first class adventurer. My help is sought throughout the land. (Well Amstrad Computer User!). No adventure defeats me. I do admit to having four or five on the go at the moment, but will undoubtedly solve them all. Not for me the mindless waggling of plastic joystick, zapping the hell out of some poor unsuspecting alien. Let's face it, the poor blighters are only doing what they have been told to do. What reward do they get, some snotty nosed, stick wiggling juvenile, on his 17th million beating hell out of him. No not for me, give me the endless maze. Oh the joy of the locked door; the ecstacy of the misty swamp; the smell of burning oil from my lantern; the exquisite pain of my rucksack digging into my shoulder, bulging with all my treasures!!!!!.

Aha!!, back to the world of the living. Well my Somerton friends you are not alone. I control a small user group in this area consisting mainly of my workmates (I use the word work advisedly) at the last count there are five or more of us Straddies down 'ere in Zummerzet, five more than you thought last month eh!!

Well keep up the average work. I have to go and do a spot more work to earn some money, so that I can save up for my Modem, so I can talk to youze guys on the old Telephone jobby tweeker. I presume you are up to date enough to actually own some form of telecommunications device. If not you can rent mine.

So goodbye for now.

The very critical one.

Adrian Steel
Ilchester, Somerset

It's a relief to know that there's somebody else down here with an Amstrad. But if you start any of those quaint country habits like spittingscrumpy, you'll be in trouble mate.

That said, I'm sure the Pilgrim will be interested to hear of your 'prowess' in adventuring. Drop him a line and become a Lord of Adventure.

Brunword

The review of *Brunword* in the December edition contains a number of errors which we would like to correct.

Mr. Anderson in his review states that *Brunword* has no on-screen help menus. This is just not true. The first menu – ESC.H – shows the 17 key words. The second menu – ESC.H,H – shows the special editing functions and ESC P shows the print menu and the current margin settings. Admittedly these can not be displayed at the same time as the text but they can be referred to anytime wihtout losing the place in the text. (*Brunword* manual, page 4, first paragraph.)

We believe that the automatic formatting of *Brunword//* is a major advantage, not a disadvantage. In normal word processors if the user forgets to reformat after editing then the printout is a mess. But not with *Brunword*. The justification in our program is achieved by adding spaces to give a balanced appearance. Firstly at puctuation and then from both sides of the line. Programs that add spaces only from one side have an unbalanced appearance and often look better if the text is not justified.

We agree that *Brunword* does have a limited text-file size as with every processor. However, *Brunword* (disc) can have a single file of 12 to 14 A4 pages or 14 separate files each of one page all stored in the memory with instant access. The size claimed for *Tasword 6128* is 10,000 words, which is about 12 to 14 pages of text. (*Tasword 464 – about 2-3 pages and Tasword 464D – 5-6 pages*). Remember that *Brunword* can be used with all the Amstrad disc drives.

In the review Mr. Anderson refers to 'slightly quirky aspects.' This is due to the automatic formatting. The program has certain rules to apply to decide on the correct format, making life simple for the user, but this does give the program a will of its own. We indicate in the manual that there must be at least one space in each line otherwise the formatting routine may become con-



"I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU PLAY THAT SILLY STRIP POKER GAME – YOU ALWAYS LOSE!"

ROY KAY, WIRRAL

fused: "Words longer than 40 characters may become a problem!

Brunword is not written in the usual format of word processors and someone used to a *Wordstar*-type processor would take some time to appreciate the subtle advantages of *Brunword*. It is very fast in every routine and is particularly good at text manipulation. We do not claim to have the most facilities, but we do claim to have an original approach that will appeal to many users.

Brunning Software
Chelmsford

Chris Anderson replies: *I accept your point about the on-screen help, although looking back through the manual I can see why I missed it. The paragraph you refer to on page 4 mentions in passing that a menu will be displayed if an invalid ESCAPE code is entered. But there is no mention there or anywhere else of an <ESC>H function. Maybe I had an early copy.*

As to the forced right-hand justification of the program, it may be true that some word-processor users do always want their text printed out this way. Why not then have it as the default option, but at least allow those of use who don't want hundreds of spaces inserted into our text files the facility to turn it off?

Finally, by my calculation, Tasword 6128's 10,000 words is equivalent to more like 25 pages of text (allowing 400 words per page). It would be easier to make comparisons if the Brunword manual gave an actual memory size for text files, instead of the rather loose 'number of pages'.

Shady screen-shots

I'll skip all the 'very well done' type comments normally printed in magazines, as they tend to get a bit boring. Well, I think I'll allow myself just one.

Very well done.

Right. With that over it's time to start the complaints.

The one thing that constantly annoys me to the point of steam coming out of every accessible exit from my body, (that's right, count them!), is so-called reputable software houses printing screen shots along with their adverts, or on the covers of their games. Nothing wrong with that, I hear you say. But think of it like this.

A long time ago, when a amg called Personal Computer Games was at the height of its fame and stardom, they (you?) reviewed *Ghostbusters*, which although it wasn't raved over, received a very favourable review

Now after its release on the Amstrad, I thought that it would be improved, with the machine's better graphics capabilities. On getting the game, I looked at the screen shots on the box, and thought that although the graphics hadn't improved, they still looked OK. But, when I loaded the game. Oh dear, oh dear! The pictures on the box were completely different to thte graphics in the game.

Software companies have no excuse for this. If they can print 'for Amstrad' on the cover, why not change the pictures? It's almost as if they've got something to hide, (and if they have they should be ashamed of themselves, as the Amstrads are capable of helluva lot, contrary to stuff around at the moment which seems to say "so sorry we had to rush the conversion", or such like.

A final note on the subject. Look at any US Gold advert, and you will see Commodore screen shots of games that have already been released on Arnold, so they can't say that "we didn't have time to take the true pictures." Surely this must be against the Trade Descriptions Act?

Nick Chaplin
Maidenhead, Berks

I suspect it may be against the Trades Descriptions Act, despite that tiny print saying 'Commodore 64 version'. A reader in Bristol is, at his very moment, bringing a case against a software house for the very reasons you describe. We'll bring you news when we can.

Shoot the Toot?

Many thanks for the copy of *Spy v Spy*. I await my order for a copy of *Impossible Mission* eagerly. (It's a far better idea than just a refund). As for your magazine – I still am not totally freaked out by the style of layout or artwork (though the *Elite* cover was rather nice), but the content is AWESOME (apart from Toot and that horrid 'AA Rave!' symbol). No longer do I have to put up with a rewritten copy of Crash (or is it Zzap – they all look the same to me!) or get my ears stuffed with Mr Sugar's ravings in the other mag. The world of the Arnold (how I hate that name) is saved (if you can get rid of that horrid 'Zzappy margin Character!)

Simon Phipps
Long Eaton, Nottingham

The questionnaire in this issue asks for readers' opinions of that margin character. My feeling is that most people will love it, rather than hate it.

More agony – but no ecstasy

I am a little angry for two reasons. Firstly, in the third issue of AA you very kindly printed my letter 'Agony and Ecstasy', but you failed to get my name right. You put 'John Black' when it should be 'Jason Black'. If you print this letter, hint, hint! please try and get it right.

Secondly you did a very nice review of *Spy v Spy*, so when I went up to Norwich on the 9th of November I saw *Spy v Spy* in Jarrolds and I bought it. While it was loading (which took a very long time) I read the review again. In the review you said that it had 'Good title tune and sound effects' and gave it 74% for sonics. When the game had finally loaded there was no title tune! Unless you have a good excuse for this, I may not be able to trust your reviews in future.

Jason Black
Wymondham, Norfolk

No names, no pack drill, John/Jason. But Wade bungled, and has been severely punished. It will not happen again.

Software censorship

In inviting comment on games such as *Battle of Britain* and *Theatre Europe* (AA December issue) I believe that you should acknowledge that the subject raised is merely the tip of the iceberg.

As computer games have developed, so too have the expectations of the people who buy them. This, quite rightly, has led a number of Software houses to respond by producing games with a greater sophistication, more interesting plot, and visually stunning graphics.

Unfortunately, there has beem a growing trend away from merely zapping aliens and robots, towards the more authentic scenarios involving in some cases wholesale slaughter of people, as well as in my view, the perverted introduction of games which feature destruction of animals (*Paws*) as an instrinsic part of the game.

The lines of distinction between the original imaginary alien- orientated games and the more realistic recent examples are narrowing.

Will the day come, when as graphics improve even more, that there is a new wave of "software-nasties"? Logically, the answer must be 'yes'.

We all know that having loaded a programme we are about to embark on a game, and just that. The problem arises not simply from playing the game, but being subjected to the images and ideas which are portrayed through it, and in turn being hardened to what is implied by the action taking place.

Should there be an answer, and if so, what is it?

Statutory censorship based on cinema ratings may be one route, albeit impossibly hard to enforce as has been found through the availability of videos for home use. A self regulatory system within the software industry would of course be a more desirable alternative. But would software producers be content to develop games without continued emphasis on realism? I don't know. Perhaps the more responsible software houses can take a lead.

Anthony Gibbs
Peterborough

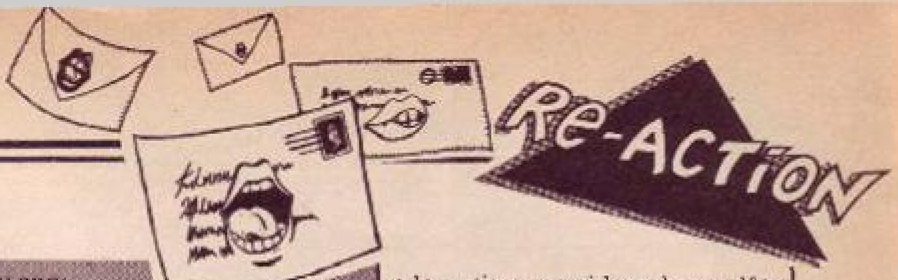
Overpriced?

I am complaining about the price and release dates of Amstrad software. Point 1 – how on earth can Amsoft sell such drivel as *Fu Kung in Las Vegas* for £8.95?!! The mind boggles at such lunacy. Point 2 – Why on earth do companies such as Elite and Ocean charge £2 more for an Amstrad game than a Spectrum game (I apologise for using such a foul name.) Point 3 – Software companies' release dates are driving me mad. Sometimes an Amstrad game is postponed so much that it is released about six months later than other versions. Please tell software companies to hurry up, and finally (At last! I've never written this much in my life. Just goes to show what AA can do to people), go prod those Torus boys to get Amstrad *Elite* out as



"I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU PLAY THAT SILLY STRIP POKER GAME – YOU ALWAYS LOSE!"

ROY KAY, WIRRAL.



I'm dying to get my hands on such a fantastic looking game. Hint! Hint! – a borrowed line from R L Grant in Issue No. 3. I hope he doesn't mind.

Michael Clark
Newton Grange, Midlothian.

Amsoft set the standard of £8.95 and other software houses followed suit. If you're in business you tend to charge as high a price as the market can bear. To be fair, though, many houses do charge less than £8.95 and many companies now have budget labels producing excellent games at very low prices. But I'm at a loss as to explain why an Amstrad game should cost more than a Spectrum game. Any offers?

But I still don't understand that 'hint, hint' business.

The price of progress

Well done – you not only appear to have maintained the standard of your mag, but dare I say you seem to be improving it. The best all-rounder by far. Keep it up. Enough of the creeping and down to the more serious stuff. Hot Potato No 1 – the demise of the 664.

Although I understand the feeling of some 664 owners, with regard to the demise of their particular model, I cannot help wondering how many of them have given any thought to the feelings of those of us who bought 464s (but really wanting a disc machine) 6-8 months before the 664 was announced. Unfortunate that we could have had all the advantages of Disc for less than the price of a 464 and DD1 unit. Were we badly treated? I don't think so. It is a fact of life that the price of progress is that someone always seems to get hurt. I do not wish to seem flippant, but I honestly feel that with all the various add-ons in the market place, plus several very good tape to disc utilities, it is possible to get an immense amount of pleasure out of the 664 at less than the total cost of an equivalent set up from the competition.

As stated I have a CPC 464 plus all such add ons that I can cop, i.e. DD1 disc drive, Voice Synth, Light pen, RS 232 interface and I dare say when I feel the time is right a sideways ROM + RAM expansion. I am beginning to wonder if I should feel cheated, abused or damaged because I have had to pay to get what I wanted.

Come on 664 owners, you got a good machine for the price you paid, or you wouldn't have bought it.

In answer to Ken Swain's letter, both Pride Utilities and Interlock Services produce Tape to Disc utilities, that have relocate options that work reasonable well and both companies are more than willing to help you with difficult programs.

Finally are there really two J. Starmer's who own Arnolds, i.e. the one in the *Fist* prize winners list and me. If so – ain't it a small world? If not, where's my prize?

Keep up the good work.

Jim Starmer
Sutton Coldfield

You have a point. But Mr. Sugar never said that he wouldn't be introducing a further machine after the 464, whereas he did say that the 6128 wouldn't be released in the UK. What do those aggrieved 664ers think?

I don't know how many Starmers there are in Sutton Colfield, but I hope that at least one of them has got his prize by now.

Hobbit diatribe

First of all, greetings from one obscure backwater to another. Having tired of sitting looking at the sheep outside, I have decided to write you a letter. Congratulations on an excellent magazine which gives genuine value for money, unlike some other games reivew magazines I could mention (but won't) which are full of adverts.

Now on to the main objective of this diatribe. (Good word that. What's it mean?) The Pilgrim has asked for *Hobbit* bugs. I shall start with the mysterious tree in the picure of the trolls' clearing, which does not appear to be attached to the ground. Then there are the black lines around the pictures which after a while begin to extend themselves beyond the pictures and wander off the edge of the screen. Then there are the more serious bugs. Firstly, there is the habit the program has of suddenly going on strike and refusing to do anything else. This usually seems to happen when you've just done something you've been trying to achieve for weeks, but before you have time to save it. Which brings me to the SAVE command, which more often than not, doesn't. (Save the game that is.) And, of course, the PRINT command, which plots pretty coloured spots all over the screen and then crashes. And last but not least, that fascinating location to be found by going east from the mountains:

You are in an empty place
Below there is a heavy rock door.
Above there is a bow.
To the E there is the round green door.
Below there is the spider web.
You see:
Nothing.

Movement from this place is impossible, none of the items in the list are obtainable and the only alternative is to switch off and start again. What I want to know is, who carried Bilbo's front door all that way over the Misty Mountains? Was it Gandalf on some of his more eccentric wanderings? No wonder he's never around when you need him!

All in all, I would say that *The Hobbit* is a very good game totally ruined by a rush conversion. I have written to Melbourne House to tell them of the bugs, but they didn't bother to write back. Must have been too busy counting their money. (I can be cutting when I want, you know.)

What a pity all software houses aren't like Tasman Software. Recently, I thought I had found a bug in *Tasword 464*. (The delete command insisted on deleting a whole line). When I wrote to them about it, I received by return of post, another copy of the program free of charge, with a letter explaining that this copy worked on their CPC664 and if it didn't on mine, then my keyboard was at fault. They were right, it is! They also answered a question, the answer to which I will pass on to your readers. Buying a DK Tronics 64k RAM pack will not give you extra file space in Tasword 464, as it is only designed to address 64k. However, *Tasword 6128* will run on a CPC464 (provided you have a disk drive) and will use the extra space. Full marks to Tasman Software for their help. It restored my faith in human nature!

Ken Walton
Bolton-le-Sands

Is war a game?

The morality of playing wargames has been questioned for as long as I have had any interest in them. I have even seen it argued that while it is OK to play Napoleonic games (Historical educational simulation) anything post 1940 was war-mongering activity.

Surely the truth is that all games are stylised competition. This being the case, different forms of competition appeal to different people. Chess is nothing more than an absurd wargame. Does this mean that the world's chess players are somehow contributing to a heightening of world tension? To go to the other extreme it could be argued that war is merely a game, played by the powerful, for horrendous stakes.

On a personal level I have for a long time considered myself to be on the pacifist side of the argument. Yet I retain a fascination both with the machinery of war and with the conduct of it. Should Wellington have won at Waterloo? Was the K G V or the North Carolina the better solution to the problems of Battleship design in the 1930's?

In conclusion I would much rather see the young and impressionable, along with everyone else, playing games that require thought and concentration. The brain like all other parts of the body improves with use, and I would imagine that developed brains will do more to prevent any possible war, than an ability to press a fire button faster than the next man. Of course if the worst comes, the man on the fire button is going to come in handy.

O G Erasmus
Blackwood, Gwent

Boris & Brendan

On the 3rd of November, a mere 35 hours after buying Mastertronic's supremely, incredibly, marvellously (etc.) amazing game *Soul of a Robot*, I traversed all the screens (ie. 250 playable) mapping as I went, and completed the task of blowing up the manic computer tyrant (and robot). It only took me 1 and 3/4 hours to reach the full 60% (it doesn't go any higher) . I shall suffice to say that the computer is a lesser machine than dearest Arnold, and the task is HARD. So am I the first?

So forget Ultimate and the rest. Mastertronic (esp. Stephen Curtis) are the best – nearly all their £1.99 games put £10 games to shame.

Stewart Russell
Glasgow

PS My machine's called Augustus-John, and I have two joysticks, Boris the Quickshot II and Brendan the Stick.

Sorry, but I don't think you can be the first, judging by the number of maps we've received. But it's still a pretty impressive achievement.



For you this Christmas

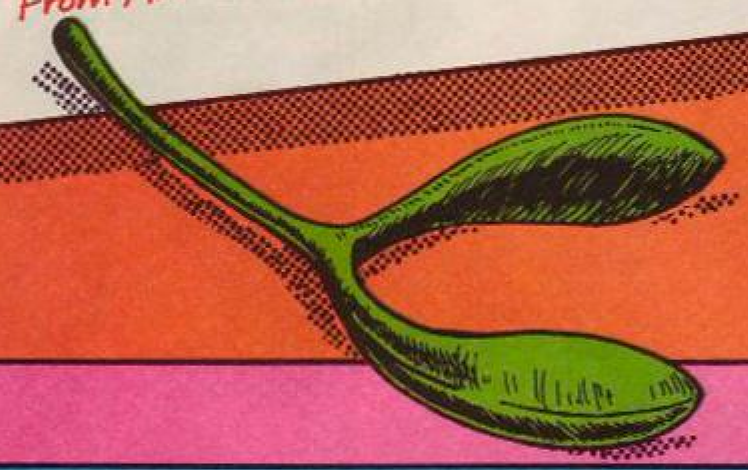
THE ALL ACTION COVER CASSETTE

Love, Amstrad Action and Ocean Software

Sooner or later in every close relationship the time comes to be generous. To give the person you care for something just a bit special. We've grown very attracted to you our readers over the last few months and we thought, well, just this once, er, we'd try to make you happy. Please accept this small token of our affection.

We really do think you'll like these games from Ocean Software. In our humble opinion they're up to the standard of programs you can pay pounds for over the counter. Super graphics. Exciting action. Hours of entertainment for you this Christmas.

From AA with love xxx.



KUNG FU

The scenario

It is end of term time at the Tokyo School for Killer Karate and the deadly final exams are approaching. You are Johnny Lowblow the smallest man in the class but the one most determined to succeed.

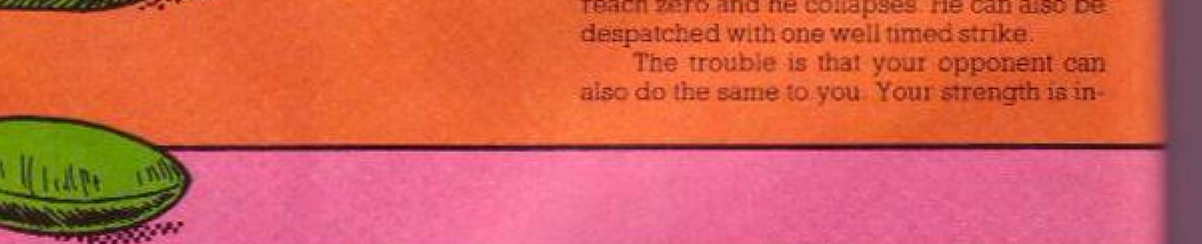
The exams take the form of a ruthless fight to the death between the students. Those who survive will find themselves pitted against the feared and respected Masters of the Art who are the instructors. You begin the battle against the weaker members of the school but will soon find yourself up against some very proficient opponents. You have three chances to get as far as you can and when you finally perish, a coloured belt marking your progress is forwarded to your relatives. Beware. If you do well enough you may even find yourself battling more than one opponent.

How to play

You have four basic attacking moves: the chop, punch, mid-kick and high-kick. These can be used to either wear down your opponent or to knock him out with a single blow. The opponent's strength is indicated by symbols in the bottom right hand corner which count down with every succesful hit until they reach zero and he collapses. He can also be despatched with one well timed strike.

The trouble is that your opponent can also do the same to you. Your strength is in-

NUMBER 1



The scenario

You're the No.1 rollerball star, famed for your ability to survive the most deadly games. Now you've been taken away from the arena and given a new task that only your skills can cope with.

A jet carrying a consignment of Zilithium crystals has exploded over an army testing range scattering them over many miles. The crystals are a vital factor in a new space propulsion device and recovery is essential. The problem is that the armies testing of various weapons has left the zone containing most of the crystals in a very dangerous state.

Nuclear and conventional weapons have left the area highly radioactive and scattered with debris. The desert creatures have become mutated and the ground has been blasted so many times that it is unable to support any vehicles. A single man moving at high speed and wearing radiation protection might just be able to negotiate the hazards and pick up the crystals but even for the No.1 it's going to be tough.

How to play

The action takes place against three different backgrounds and in a number of stages. On each stage you will face particular problems as you try to collect the three crystals that will take you on to the next section. The crystals appear one at a time on all but the first stage and to pick them up you just have to skate into them. The difficulty is in avoiding not all the other hazards that appear on the ground.

You can skate to the left or right, although you have to plan ahead since you don't move sideways very fast. You can also jump and duck, which is necessary to avoid objects when you're in a tight corner. Vultures and spinning coins have to be ducked under or sidestepped while horizontal bars and other ground objects have to be jumped over.

Direct hits with a skate or your head on

KUNG FU KUNG FU





ONE PLAYER KEYS
/ = left
\ = right
1 = chop
2 = punch
3 = mid-kick
4 = high-kick

TWO PLAYER KEYS
Player 1
Z = Left
X = Right
1 = Chop
2 = Punch
3 = Mid-kick
4 = High-kick

Player 2
/ = Left
\ = Right
0 = Chop
- = Punch
↑ = Mid-kick
CLR = High-kick

dicated by a hand in the bottom left hand corner which changes colour as you weaken and starts to flash just before your demise.

When one of the fighters does get flattened you have the option to see a slow motion replay by pressing "R". This will show you exactly how the final move was successful. The game can be played against the computer or a friend with points being awarded against the computer for the speed and skill with which you despatch opponents.

The playing options are very flexible. You can play the computer using either joystick or keyboard. If you want to take on a human opponent you can play using two joysticks, joystick and keyboard, or both on keyboard.

JOYSTICK CONTROLS
Up = mid-kick
Down = high-kick
Fire = punch
Right = walk right/chop
Left = walk left/chop

Loading the tape
It loads just like any other tape. Rewind to the start of the side you want to load. If you have a 664 or 6128 you should type in the command |TAPE. Press the Control and Enter keys simultaneously and follow the on-screen instructions.

MBER 1

any object on the ground, in the air or a pole will bring the skater crashing to the ground to lose one of his three lives. Near misses indicated by the noise of you brushing by an object will also gradually build up and are indicated by the changing colour of a helmet in the top left hand corner of the screen. Too many and you'll die.

The game can be joystick or keyboard controlled with the "A" key or fire button starting the game. The other controls are as follows:

DUCK = joystick back or "Z" key
JUMP = joystick up or "A" key
LEFT = joystick left or "/" key
RIGHT = joystick right or "\" key
PAUSE = 0

At the end of a stage you will flick to the score screen. To start the next stage just move the joystick or hit a movement key.

Your score is determined by how fast you can pick up the crystals on each stage, but remember it is better to play safe and stay alive than to go for the difficult crystals. Another thing to watch for is that when a crystal disappears off the screen it will immediately appear at the back again so that you should be able to spot it and home in on it.

JOIN THE NATIONWIDE HIGH-SCORE CHASE!

The fact that all of you out there now have a copy of these two games means that we should be able to have some fun over the next few months indulging in the pleasurable past-time of high-score chasing.

The all-in-one entry form in this issue includes a space for high score entries and from now on we shall be keeping a special eye open for scores on Kung Fu and Number 1. You never know what manner of reward we might have in store for the person who can establish the nation's top score. Nor for the person who can provide the best set of playing tips, cheats or Pokes for these games.

Just to get you going we thought we'd let you know how we in the office got on with the games.

KUNG FU

The art department proved themselves to be essentially peace-loving people with TREVOR GILHAM managing a Mogadon rating of 18, while GEORGE MURPHY notched up a sluggish, but slightly more violent 46. Mind you the editor only allowed them one turn each.

The lovely DIANE TAVENER revealed her hidden killer instinct with a first off score of 78. Software editor BOB WADE, as is expected of such a person, achieved the more respectable 338 after only a couple turns.

But this wasn't enough for publisher CHRIS ANDERSON who fisted his way (after weeks of practice) to a black-belt score of 446.

The only person to completely disgrace himself was editor PETER CONNOR who scored zero. But he was suffering from a sore knee at the time.

NUMBER 1

This proved an even greater challenge than Kung Fu. GEORGE and TREVOR's scores made it into two figures, but after that the less said the better. DIANE too evidently prefers ice-skating to roller-skating and did not impress the judges overly.

PETER recovering from his sore knee managed a quick 33 before the joystick was snatched from his hand. CHRIS did only a wave or two better reaching just 66 but vowing to do better next turn.

Runaway winner and uncontested AA Number 1 champion was Bob Wade who managed a high-score of 355, clearing through all three backgrounds and entering the nigh impossible realms beyond.



Infocom explodes onto Arnold

Hot from the Pilgrim's cleft stick comes big, big news for lovers of big, big adventures. The Infocom programs are being released on Amstrad.

If that doesn't have you hopping up and down with excitement it must be because: a) you don't have a disk drive – these programs, being massive, can only run on disk, b) you can't afford to pay £20 for a program, because that's how much they'll cost, or c) you don't know what's special about Infocom adventures.

What's special about them is that more than any other adventuresyou're able to interact with the computer in remarkable detail. The programs contain no graphics at all – just reams of superbly-written text describing each location and each event. But they have a remarkable ability to make sense of and respond appropriately to your keyboard inputs. So much so, that you can easily forget it's a computer you're talking to.

The programs being released are *Zork I, II* and *III, Sea-Stalker*, Planetfall and *Readline* all on disk at £19.95. Their latest smash hit *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* will cost you £24.95. If it's any comfort, these prices are a lot lower than people pay for these games in the United States.

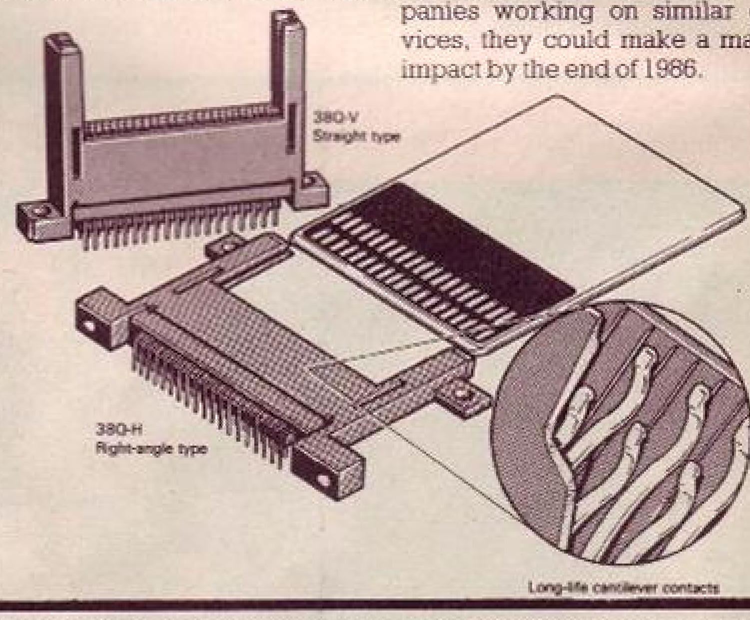
The programs are being distributed by Softsel. Standby for a feature from the Pilgrim next issue.

FutureWatch department

Cumana, a company specialising in computer add-ons, has announced what it calls 'a radical breakthrough in information storage media' to be made available on the Amstrad micros. It comes in the form of a credit-card sized piece of platic containing an integrated circuit chip which can store up to 128K of information.

The 'Astron' card is used by inserting it into a cheap adaptor which plugs into the back of your micro. Durable, light-weight and potentially very cheap, it could be used instead of a disk drive (retaining information even with the computer switched off thanks to a built-in lithium battery). Alternatively it could be used by software houses instead of disks or cassettes as a new format for selling software. It would be much harder then to pirate the software.

Prices for the adaptor and cards are not available yet, but short-term they're unlikely to be significantly cheaper or more effective than using a disk drive. However with several other companies working on similar devices, they could make a major impact by the end of 1986.



3 new from Ultimate

Three new games are being released for the Christmas market by Ultimate Play the Game, the people behind the top selling *Knight Lore* and *Alien 8*. First out is *Nightshade*, already available on the Spectrum, although the Amstrad version is said to be 'enhanced'. This is being followed by *Gunfight* and *Cyberun*, the second of which appears to be the game Ultimate are placing most hopes on. At time of going to press we have no further details on these programs – Ultimate are famed for playing their cards close to their chests – but we hope to print reviews next time.

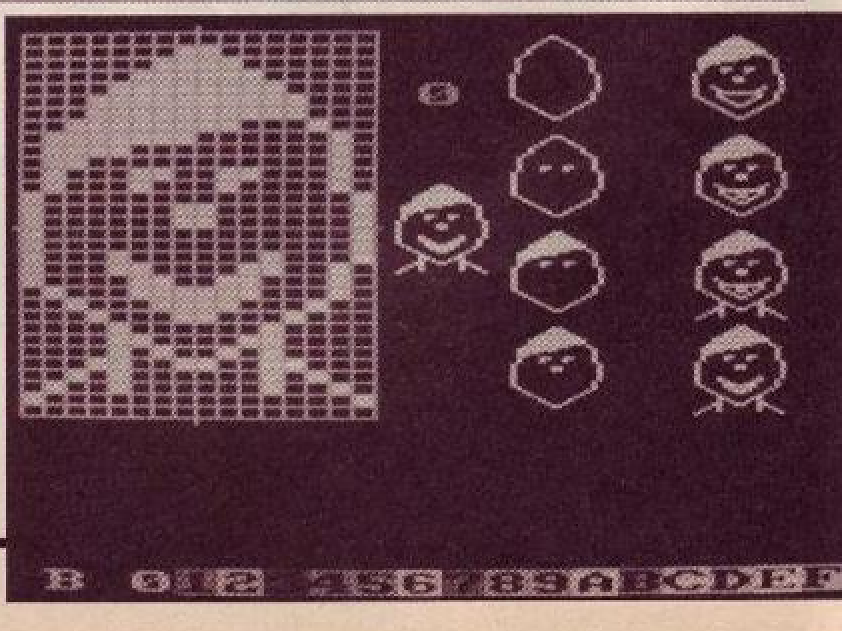
Gem of a graphics prog

We've just received a pre-production copy of Gem Software's new *Shape and Sound Effect Generator* which is being distributed by Amsoft. It looks very promising.

The program gives you an easy way of creating quite complex graphic shapes. It's possible to store a sequence of related shapes and then flash them on screen one after another, thereby creating impressively fast animation.

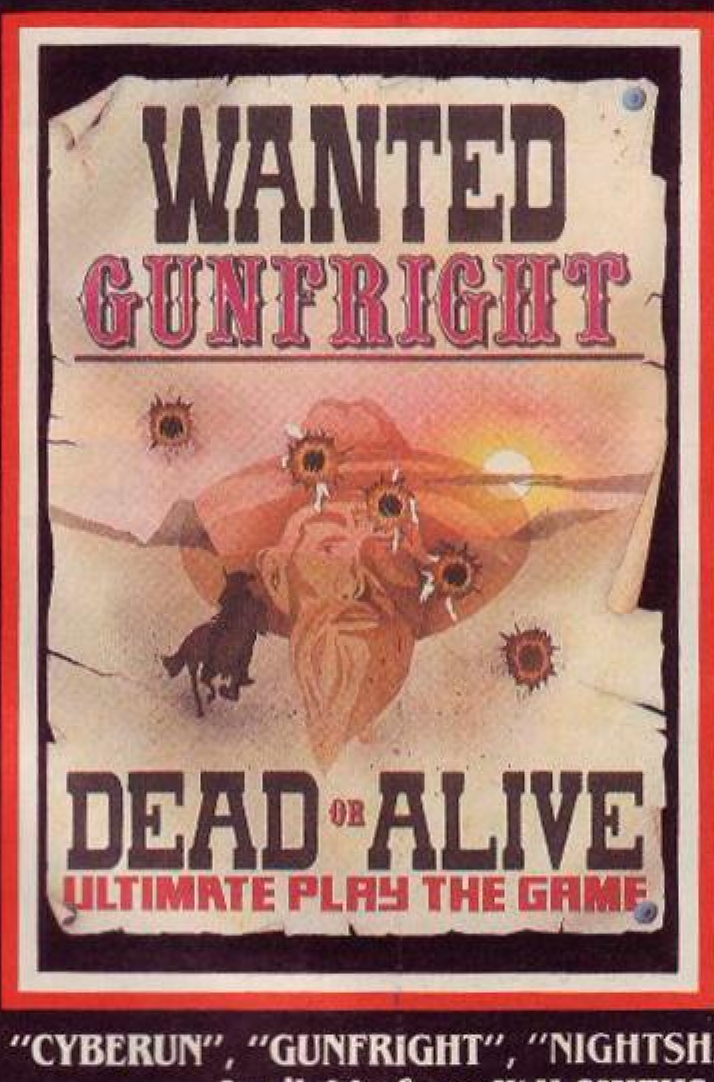
In addition there's a sound effects generator and a demo of the quality of programs which can be produced. You could, for example, use the program to create and save your own arcade games.

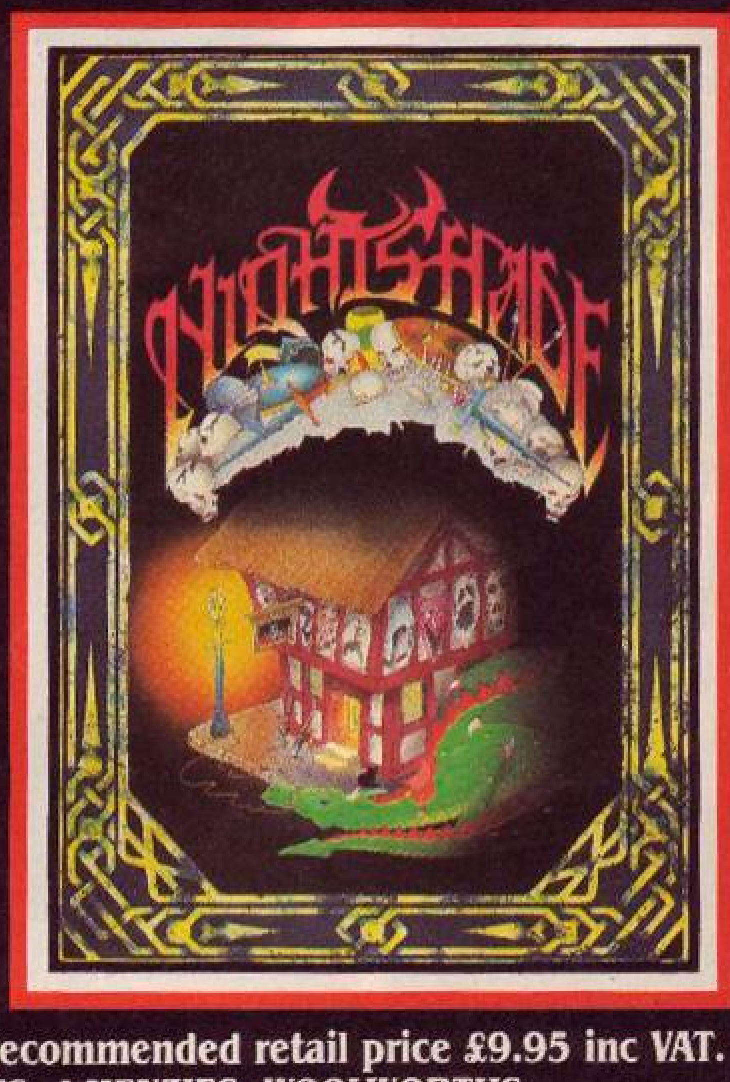
The price of the program has not been fixed at time of going to press, but is likely to be around the £15 mark.



AMSTRAD CPC 464







"CYBERUN", "GUNFRIGHT", "NIGHTSHADE" recommended retail price £9.95 inc VAT.
Available from W.H.SMITHS, BOOTS, J.MENZIES, WOOLWORTHS
and all good software retail outlets. Also available from
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU
(P&P are included) Tel: 0530 411485

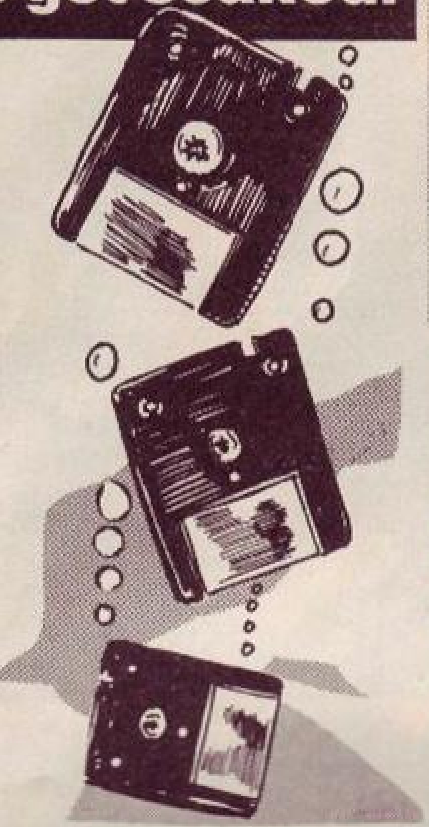
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME

60,000 disks get soaked!

Amstrad have been trying to play down the significance of reported shortages of the 3" disks which are used on Amstrad micros. One senior company figure told us 'The whole thing's been blown up out of all proportion.' He said a sudden surge in demand for the disks by software houses had caused a slight temporary shortage, but that these were not a major problem.

The shortage, temporary or otherwise, has caused some distributors problems in obtaining disk versions of Amstrad games, even those from Amsoft themselves. *Cyrus 2 Chess* for example was in very short supply during most of October and November.

Since no other micros use the disks, software houses and others who need to buy up large numbers of them for duplication have to rely on supplies imported from the Far East by Amstrad themselves. The company appears to have been caught out by unexpected demand in the Christmas runup, with software houses suddenly realising that sales of the CPC6128 were opening up a huge new market.



The situation wasn't helped when one consignment of 60,000 disks was shipped in a badly sealed container. Apparently they came out dripping wet and ruined. 'We dried them out but they still wouldn't work,' commented an Amstrad executive.

Blaby's babies

Blaby Computer Games have launched a range of budget software for the Amstrad, most of it consisting of versions of arcade classics. The titles, which sell for £1.99 each, include *The Bells* (Hunchback), *Jumpman* (Q*Bert), *Wriggler* (Centipede) and *Zero* (Grid Cycles). Possibly the most interesting title is *R.E.M.*, which is loosely modelled on *Boulder Dash*. However it has to be said that our initial glimpse at these titles hasn't been too exciting. They're nowhere near the standard of the Mastertronic games.

Standby for reviews next time.



Software Database

A new software database for Amstrad users is being established in the north-east. The aim of the *Amstrad User Software Database* is to provide 'free public domain software' contributed by users. Amstrad owners from beginners to profesionals have been involved in setting up the organisation.

The AUSD is a non-profit making venture, but a charge will be made for the supply of software. This seems likely to be £2.75 for tape and £5.50 for disc – or £2 if you supply your own blank disc.

Programs should be available from the beginning of the new year. For more details, send a SAE to: AUSD, PO Box 11, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1RP.

Sneak peek

Monty on the Run from Gremlin Graphics has appeared but so far only in demo form. Our copy shows all the rooms and nasties, revealing a very tricky set of platform screens.

There's some great music to accompany the game and this was in full evidence on the demo as Monty leaped around some unmoving screens that should spring to life on the final version. Monty is of course running from the law and needs to select the right items in his freedom kit to get away on the cross channel ferry. Hopefully we'll have a full review in the next issue but if you see it first it will cost £8.95 on cassette to beat us to it.

We've also cast a passing glance over *Kokotoni Wilf* which also arrived in unfinished form but by next month should be reviewable. It stars a winged hero collecting amulets in different time zones. Having a good flap will cost £8.95 on cassette and £14.95 on disk.

The Mastertronics Master

Following requests from hundreds of AA readers (well, we did get letters from two people), we've managed to track down rising star Stephen Curtis, the programmer of the chart-topping Mastertronic programs *Nonterraqueous* and *Soul of a Robot*.

They're his first big hits in two and a half years of programming for software houses, and could be the start of still better things – Stephen, who's 22, told us that they were just the first in a series of 21 games to be released over the next few years! Here are, wait for it, EXCLUSIVE details of the next title *The Human Harvest* as described by Stephen: 'The game is set in planet groups. Each group consists of 42 different planets and 2436 screens, so the total number of screens is 9744. Movement between planets is via rockets.

'There are many hazards to look out for (eg. manic Droids) and puzzle elements. A high degree of shooting is required. The aim of the game is to reach the planet offering safety from the Droids.'



The game will be followed by Nonterraqueous 4, *Vect – the Avenging Droid*.

Stephen, who inhabits a flat in Pontypridd, South Wales, puts down the success of his latest games to the fact that he'd spent much more time than usual in planning and writing them. That, together with the fact that they're being sold for just £1.99.

Page Making Software

Amx – makers of the Mouse – and Mirrorsoft are both set to release software in the new year which will allow Amstrad owners to do page make-up for magazines on-screen.

The programs will allow users to move text around on screen and create graphics displays. It will t hen be possible to print out the whole lot. Special features on Mirrorsoft's *Fleet Street Editor* will include a graphics library of around 600 images that users will be able to incorporate in their finished product. AMX's *Page Maker* will be used in conjunction with thte Mouse and will feature a digitiser allowing you to transfer photos to the screen and then blow-up particular sections.

Both programs should be available around February/March. But they won't come cheap: *Fleet Street Editor* will weigh in at £39.95 on disc, while *Page Maker* will cost £49.95.

Pick Pocket!

"The only fully professional word processor on the Amstrad"

Amstrad Action, October 1985



The new Pocket WordStar is so professional Amstrad Action helped us to write this advertisement — with their appreciation of the latest word processor product from the WordStar range — the most popular word processing packages in the world.

Read some of the other things they said:

"Pocket WordStar is for people who regularly have to sit long hours at a Keyboard . . ."

"The designers have taken great care to make things as easy as possible. The manual is superb, clearly written and well cross-referenced"

"Any reformatting required can take place instantly. This one fact alone is enough to ensure that Amstrad Action's writing team is now transferring to WordStar".

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Specifications

Operating System: CP/M 2.0 or higher

CPU Memory: 56K of RAM is required

Pocket WordStar can operate with one disk drive containing at least 120K.

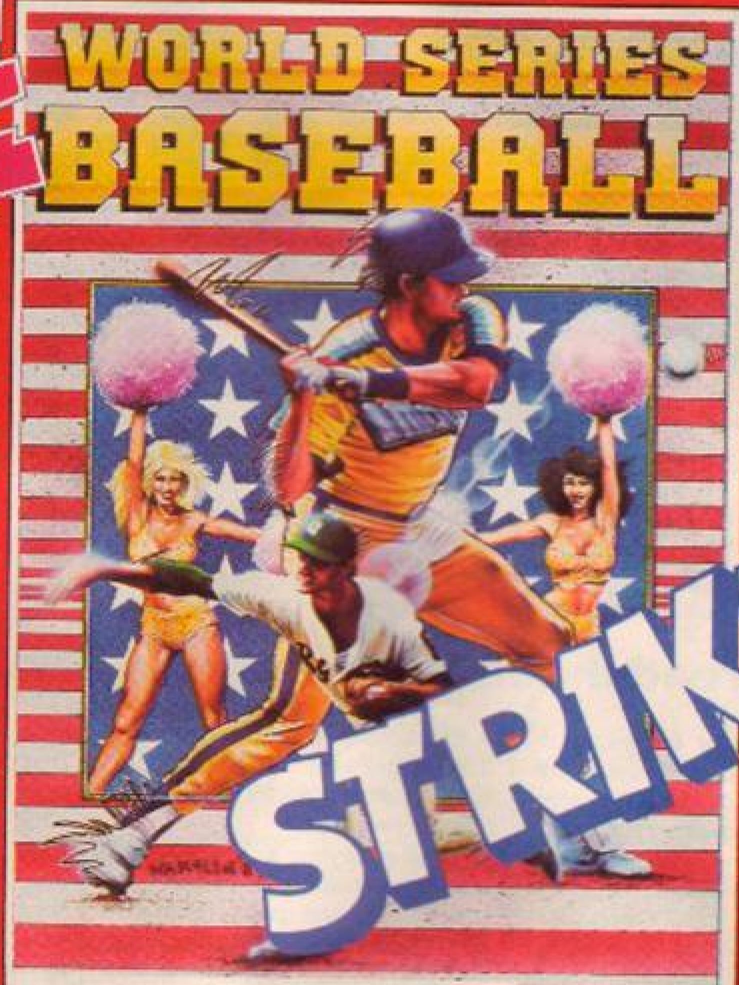
MicroPro.

MicroPro International Ltd, Haygarth House, 28-31 High Street, Wimbledon Village, London SW19 5BY

tion From Imagine

..the name of the game





ZZAP!

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL

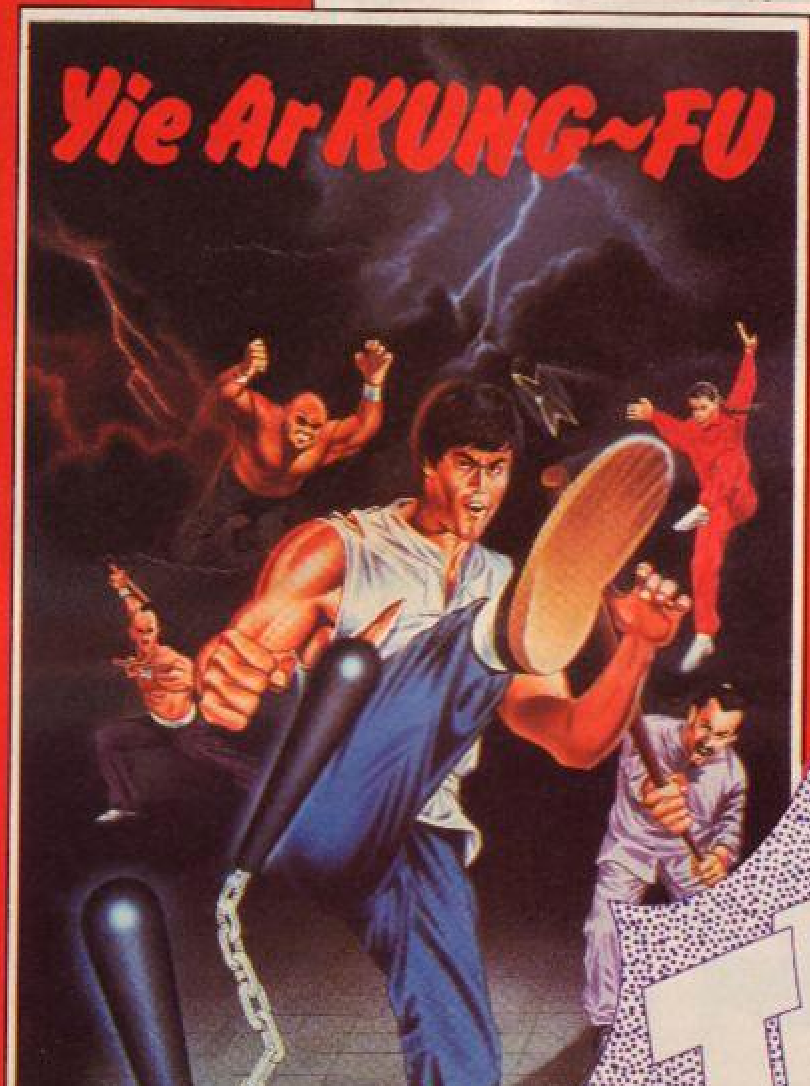
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and many more of the authentic fun features of real American Baseball.

ami's No. 1 arcade
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YIE AR KUNG FU

If you can master the ten moves, expect the unexpected and FIGHT for your LIFE against the formidable masters of the martial arts you may live to meet them again on the mountain or in the Temple.

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SKYS, Rumbelows, Greens, Spectrum Shops and all good software dealers. Trade enquiries welcome.

What spreadsheets can do for YOU

The one and only BERTRAM CARROT explains how a spreadsheet program could give your Amstrad an ultra-powerful new function. He also gives a detailed review of two such programs, both major new releases.

How spreadsheets can buy you a car

'Spreadsheets are for accountants, are very expensive and are difficult to use.' This is the opinion of many micro users, and probably of a few readers of Amstrad Action. This is a shame, because none of it's true.

There are plenty of uses for a spreadsheet in the home, any of which can make learning how to use one very worthwhile. Here are just a few:

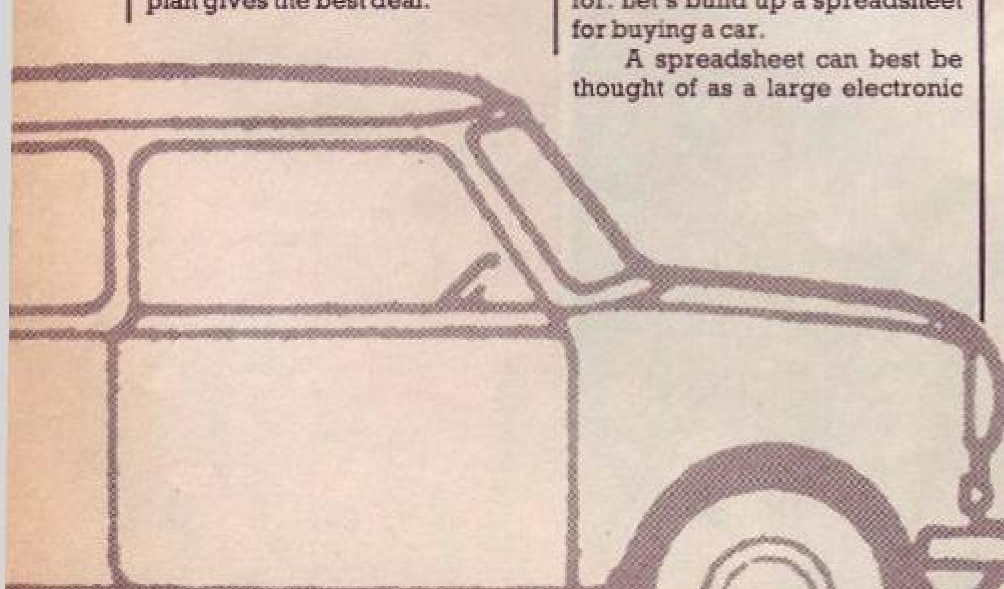
- ▶ Budgetting – trying to keep track of where the money goes.
- ▶ Buying – making the best choice when buying hi-fi/car/washing machine.
- ▶ Investing – keeping track of your ten shares in BT.
- ▶ Assessing – deciding which insurance/mortgage/savings plan gives the best deal.
- ▶ Predicting – trying to decide if Alan Sugar will 'upgrade' your new Amstrad micro within the next two weeks!

Take buying a new car, for instance. How would you decide which make and model to go for? You'd probably start by deciding how much you could afford, and checking all the models which fall within your price range. You might look at special features such as radios or heated windows. You'd be likely to compare the fuel consumptions and the cost of spares and servicing.

Having done all this, you'd have to juggle with the figures to try and arrive at a 'Best Buy'. This kind of number juggling is just what a spreadsheet is designed for. Let's build up a spreadsheet for buying a car.

A spreadsheet can best be thought of as a large electronic sheet of squared paper, much like arithmetic exercise books at school. Unlike an exercise book, though, each square (or 'cell' as they're called in a spreadsheet) can hold a whole number or word. You can enter numbers and headings into the cells of the spreadsheet and define relationships between cells. If you have two numbers if two different cells you can define another cell to display the sum of the two. If you look at the sample spreadsheet display, you can see the names of seven cars typed in as headings to the columns of figures. The various cost categories are typed in at the start of each row, and a few extra numbers, used in the calculations, are put in at the bottom of the sheet.

Now you can start to type in the prices, M.P.G.s, service intervals and average costs of spares. Most of these figures are available from the showroom leaflets, or any of the motoring magazines. In this particular example, everything has been worked out in terms of cost. The running costs are the costs of petrol and servicing over 10000 miles; what you might do in a year. Spares costs are best worked out by pricing a few stan-



Selecting a new car for AMSTRAD ACTION

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1		Frog	Morbid	Stalwart	Miasin	Toymotor	Citrus	Appaul
2		Feaster	Retro	Rambo	Fairy	Harlot	Weeza	Banta
3								
4	Price	5990.00	5490.00	6200.00	5895.00	6150.00	6250.00	5560.00
5	M.P.G.	45.00	56.00	47.00	44.00	46.00	52.00	47.00
6	Cost/10000ml	453.33	364.29	434.04	463.64	443.48	392.31	434.04
7	Serv Period	5000.00	6000.00	5000.00	10000.00	6000.00	8000.00	5000.00
8	Serv/10000ml	100.00	83.33	100.00	50.00	83.33	62.50	100.00
9	Spares cost	46.00	49.00	56.00	100.00	93.00	90.00	74.00
10								
11	Total Costs	6489.33	5903.29	6690.04	6458.64	6686.48	6732.31	6068.04
12								
13	Features	5.00	7.00	4.00	8.00	8.00	6.00	5.00
14	Appeal	5.00	6.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00
15								
16	Overall Cost	12989.33	10453.29	14490.04	11008.64	11236.48	11932.31	12568.04
17								
18								
19	Petrol Price per Gal		2.04		Features and Appeal Weighting			1.00
20	Cost of Service (Av)		50.00					

FORMULAS

```
1:10000/(r-1)*c3r19
2:10000/(r-1)*r20c3
3:(r-7)+(r-5)+(r-2)
4:(20-(r-3)-(r-2))*650*r19c8+(r-5)
```



This month we devote these incredibly sober, important and user-friendly pages to a major feature on spreadsheets, plus reviews of various toolkit programs and the new Tas-Spell.

dard units such as radiators or alternators.

The petrol cost per 10000 miles is worked out as 10000/M.P.G. x the cost of a gallon of petrol. Each of the cells in row 6 of the spreadsheet uses formula 1. This formula takes the M.P.G. figure from the cell in the previous row (r-1) and the petrol price from cell c3r19 (the cell at the intersection of row 19 and column 3). Each cell in the spreadsheet is referred to like this.

The service cost is worked out in a similar way, by dividing 10000 miles by the service period and multiplying by the average cost of a service. This is done in formula 2.

The total cost is calculated in formula 3 by adding together the price, petrol costs and service costs for each car. The results are put in the cells in row 11.

When you are making an important decision, like buying a new car, there are bound to be factors like design and special features which aren't normally found as figures. You can still include these factors in your decision, however, by scoring each car out of 10 in the 'appeal' categories, and then weighting their importance against the cost factors. The scores out of 10 are put in the cells in rows 13 and 14, and the weighting and final calculation is done by formula 4. The weighting factor is taken into account using the value of cell r19c8. As you can see, the Morbid Retro and Missin Fairy seem to come out tops.

The valuable thing about a spreadsheet is that, once you've set it up, you can alter any of the figures and see at a glance what effect it will have on all the others. In this example you could chance the price or M.P.G. of a car and immediately see if it affects your decision. If you decide the cost factors should have more weight you simply alter one value (in r19c8) and the whole sheet can be recalculated automatically. Trying doing that with pencil, paper and pocket calculator!

PAUPER'S PICK

If you fancy the idea of messing around with a spreadsheet, but can't afford the outlay of the two programs reviewed here, why not get hold of Mini Office from Database Software? This includes a spreadsheet program which although limited, is really well thought out and easy to use – ideal as an introduction. And the whole program, which also includes a word-processor and database only costs £5.95 on cassette or £9.95 on disk.

MASTERCALC 128

For the CPC 6128, Campbell Software Design/Amsoft, £34.90 disk

Until recently the two main spreadsheet programs available for Amstrad computers were the original Mastercalc and the rather unwieldy Microspread from Amsoft. Mastercalc 128 is a new, improved version of the CPC 464/664 program, which makes use of the extra banked memory of the 6128 to offer a maximum spreadsheet of 7000 cells, or a sheet 80 rows by 80 columns. This is over twice as big as the original Mastercalc could support. The program runs under AMSDOS like their database program Masterfile. There's a CPC 6128 version of that available, too.

When you first load the program, you're presented with a small menu which covers filing, cataloging your discs and customising the colour-scheme of the display. Mastercalc will run in 40 or 80 column modes, but you really need 80 columns to see a decent amount of your sheet.

When you set up a new sheet you're given the option of defining the number of rows and columns you want to use. You should try and estimate roughly the size and shape of the sheet you'll need, although if you get it wrong you can add extra rows or columns later on. Not so with Microspread, where the size of the sheet is fixed.

The spreadsheet itself consists of cell co-ordinates along the top and down the left-hand side of the screen, and both rows and columns are marked from 1 upwards. Column 1 is wider than the others to allow for the row headings, but the width of any column may be adjusted individually. It's more usual, and less confusing, to label one of the axes from A to Z, then AA to AZ etc. In practice, using numbers for both is not too difficult to get used to, though.

At the bottom of the screen is a single comment line, where the program displays any messages, and where your commands are echoed. The normal message reminds you how to display the 'help' screen, which details all Mastercalc's commands.

Mastercalc uses a rectangular block in inverse video as a cursor, which you can move around the spreadsheet using the cursor keys. If the spreadsheet is too large to fit completely into a mode 2 screen, the screen acts as a 'window' onto the sheet and can be moved around it using the cursor keys with <SHIFT>. This movement is very smooth and fast, and the screen is redrawn quickly.

To enter text into a cell you simply move the cursor to that cell, type <"> to signal a text entry, and type away. Mastercalc allows you to type across the boundaries between cells, as long as subsequent cells are empty. You complete the entry by pressing <RETURN>.

Entering numbers is even easier. You move the cursor to the required cell and type in the number, again pressing <RETURN> at the end. If you're entering a series of numbers in a row or column, you can set Mastercalc to move automatically to the adjacent cell each time you press <RETURN>.

Most of Mastercalc's features are called by pressing a letter key, either on its own or with <CTRL>. When you come to put in the formulae on your sheet, you start by pressing <CTRL>F, which brings up a prompt offering 'New/Amend/Erase'. Having selected your option you type in the formula.

MONTEGUE BERTRAM Fashion Sales

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
2									
3	Suits	7500	7245	6865	6245	7823	8230	8454	7459
4	Jackets	4678	4398	4407	4267	5600	5026	5423	5002
5	Trousers	2045	1998	2037	2498	2068	2987	2983	2587
6	Jumpers	1567	1984	1657	1557	1776	1457	1874	1250
7									
8	Pants	1208	1365	1287	1365	1498	1267	1265	1387
9	Vests	890	937	978	1035	846	836	842	888
10	Socks	2036	2835	2458	2864	2546	2875	2345	2654
11									
12	Top Clothes	15790	15625	14966	14567	17267	17700	18734	16298
13	Underwear	4134	5137	4723	5264	4890	4978	4452	4929
14	Shoes	3876	3877	3459	3654	3776	3287	3756	3821
15									
16	Monthly Tot	23800	24639	23148	23485	25933	25965	26942	25048
17	Running Tot	23800	48439	71587	95072	121005	146970	173912	198960
18									
19		Trousers are down again, but socks are our stocking trade.							
20	Comments:	Our slogan 'Let Bertram suit you' wasn't a good investment.							

▶ Printout of spreadsheet from Mastercalc 128

A typical formula might be '(c3 + c4)*2'. This would mean 'the sum of column 3 and column 4, multiplied by 2'. The observant among you might say 'but which row does this refer to?'. The answer is whichever row the cursor is lying in. You can use the same formula in many cells in your spreadsheet, and Mastercalc will work out the right cell references. Microspread also uses the idea of 'portable' formulae, but Microspread's can only refer to a maximum of two cells. With Mastercalc you are only limited to a maximum of 75 characters per formula. You can also have up to 99 formulae, many more than with Microspread.

Mastercalc allows you to reference cells relatively, as well as by their row and column numbers. This means you can refer, for instance, to the cell two columns to the right (c+2) or three rows above (r-3) the current one. This ability is particularly useful when calculating compound interest or running totals and is a distinct improvement over the original 464/664 version of the program.

Mastercalc only allows the four arithmetic operators +, -, * and /, and brackets to control the order of calculation. Although it's possible to manipulate the cells of a Masterfile spreadsheet from BASIC, it would still be useful to be able to directly calculate such things as maximums and minimums for a range of cells.

The program works at much higher precision than BASIC. All the arithmetic functions are separately programmed in machine-code and have more than sufficient precision for the mad scientist

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DYNAMITE DAN

94% Crash Smash

"What makes the game is the graphics – large, witty, bizarre and beautifully animated . . . each screen has something remarkable, and horribly difficult puzzles . . . Dynamite Dan is not just another Miner surrogate and is at least as essential to your collection."
Popular Computing Weekly.

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or fanatical auditor.

Most spreadsheets allow you to replicate (the American word for copy) the same formula into a row or column of cells automatically. Masterfile doesn't do this, but does allow you to use a form of shorthand which is nearly as quick.

Where Mastercalc really scores over Microspread, and most other spreadsheets, is its ability to divide the screen into two halves and display different sections of the spreadsheet in each half. This means you can look at two completely separate areas of your model at the same time, and flip the cursor between the two to modify figures or titles. Very handy.

Masterfile can also plot bar charts from the numbers in the sheet. You simply select the rows or columns you wish to plot, and the histograms are drawn in the bottom half of the screen. If you have an Epson or Star printer, you can take a high-res dump of the screen.

Whichever printer you have, you can print out sections of a spreadsheet, and send escape codes to enable special print features. This is useful if you have a printer capable of printing more than 80 columns across the page, as you can then print larger sections of big spreadsheets.

The manual is the photo-copied, dot-matrix affair offered with the original Mastercalc, and includes both tutorial and reference sections. The extra features offered by Mastercalc 128 are included in a text file on disc, and may be displayed or printed out by selecting an option from within the program. Campbell claim to have done this to keep down costs. I'm sure it does, but still feel you're entitled to a full manual for the program you buy. Mastercalc is a well-written, professional program, which works quickly and offers many useful facilities. I'm surprised Campbell Software didn't include some elementary statistical functions, but then, for many uses, they wouldn't be needed. Well worth the money.

G O O D N E W S

▶ **Fast, big (up to 7000 cells) and easy to use.**
▶ **High precision. Can display numbers up to 9,999,999,999,999,999 (whew!)**
▶ **Graphics capability. Can represent figures as bar charts.**
▶ **Split screen display. Can show two parts of a spreadsheet at once.**

B A D N E W S

▶ **Can only use simple arithmetic functions +,-,* and /.**
▶ **Can't replicate formulae automatically.**

SUPERCALC 2

For CPC 6128 or PCW 8256, from Amsoft/Sorcim, £49.95 disk

As Mastercalc 128 is leaps ahead of Microspread, so Supercalc 2 offers a lot more than Mastercalc. Supercalc is one of the original business spreadsheet programs, which has been updated through a number of different versions before the second edition Supercalc 2. Amsoft have done a deal with Sorcim, the US producers of the program, to offer it at 49.95, rather than its more usual price of 200+. Amstrad's argument runs like this 'You can't expect your average truck driver to pay more for one piece of software than he (she?) did for the computer'. A fair point. And so the beneficial deal.

What you get for this money is not a cut-down version of the program, but one specially tailored to the workings of the CPC 6128. The full program is there, together with the installation routines and several sample spreadsheets for you to play around with. The documentation is the original Sorcim text as well; very well produced and with plenty of illustrations and coloured highlighting. The manual consists of a full reference guide, excellent 'ten minute' tutorial and a quick reference 'Answer Card'. There's so much of it that it only just fits into one of Amsoft's A4 binders.

Supercalc 2 runs under CP/M where over a million users have proved its effectiveness. The program offers a maximum spreadsheet size of 16000 cells, with up to 63 columns and 254 rows. In practice you'd probably run out of memory space before filling all these cells, and it's hard to think of many applications that would use that size of sheet, anyway.

The spreadsheet screen looks similar to Mastercalc 128's, except that the columns are labelled A, B, C, etc and there are three status lines at the bottom of the screen, rather than Mastercalc's one.

A	B	C	D	E	F
1:SUPERCALC WORKSHEET					
2:					
3:	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
4:NET SALES	1000	1100	1210	1331	1464
5:					
6:COST OF GOODS SOLD	300	330	363	399	439
7:----------------	----	----	----	----	----
8:GROSS PROFIT	700	770	847	932	1025
9:					
10:RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	160	176	194	213	234
11:MARKETING	200	224	251	281	315
12:ADMINISTRATIVE	140	151	163	176	190
13:----------------	----	----	----	----	----
14:TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	500	551	608	670	739
15:					
16:INCOME BEFORE TAXES	200	219	239	261	285
17:					
18:INCOME TAXES	80	88	96	105	114
19:----------------	----	----	----	----	----
20:NET INCOME	120	131	144	157	171

▶ Sample spreadsheet produced on Supercalc 2

These lines are not there for effect, either, as each one shows useful information all the time. The bottom line echoes the commands and formulae you type from the keyboard. The next line up gives various information, including column width setting, a 'Help' message and the remaining memory available. The third row shows the contents, format and co-ordinates of the current cell (the one with the cursor in it). Supercalc 2 offers copious help messages for almost every command or action you can make. Combined with the quick reference card, it's easy to get the hang of the basic controls, and you can add extra commands to your repertoire as needed.

Where Supercalc 2 really scores over Mastercalc 128 is in its range of commands, and techniques for applying them. As well as the normal arithmetic and logical operators (<, >, <> etc), Supercalc 2 offers direct calculation of percentages and powers, as well as trigonometric functions, averages, maximums, minimums, roots, sums and 'lookup'. This last function looks up a value in one row or column and reads off an equivalent value from another; very useful if you want to build a conversion table into your sheet.

Supercalc cells are refered to by their co-ordinates, as with Mastercalc, so the top, left-hand cell is A1, and the bottom right on a full-sized sheet is BK254. To save effort when entering repetitive figures, you can replicate a number from one cell, or range of cells, to another range. This system is very simple and effective to use, as is Supercalc's ability to repeat a text character across a row of cells, which considerably speeds line drawing. Values can be refered to relatively or absolutely. The screen can be split to show two sections of a spreadsheet, as with Mastercalc, but Supercalc can split the screen horizontally or vertically, and change the size of each half.

Loading, saving and printing all or part of a spreadsheet are

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CONCLUSION

Overall, it is very much a question of 'you pays your money and takes your choice'. Mastercalc is a good, fast spreadsheet, which may well be all you need for your forecasting and budgetting. If you're using your CPC 6128 in business, though, or if you have a lot of financial or scientific uses for a spreadsheet, then pay the extra £15 and go for Supercalc 2. It must be one of the best bargains on the Amstrad this year.

simple operations, and you can transfer data from Supercalc to other programs, such as word processors like Wordstar.

G O O D N E W S

▶ **Very big (theoretically up to 16000 cells) and very powerful.**
▶ **Many useful maths facilities, including MAX,MIN and LOOKUP.**
▶ **Plenty of 'help' screens and excellent manual.**

B A D N E W S

▶ **Not a lot. But you might find even the reduced price out of your range.**

Keyboard whizz-kid PATRICK MCDONALD casts his eye (and fingers) over a range of programming toolkits plus the new spelling checker from Tasman.

TOOLBOXES

If your car engine starts playing up, you don't necessarily go out and buy a new one. You try and adjust it yourself. But without exactly the right equipment it could prove to be very tricky indeed. So you go out and buy a toolbox or toolkit containing the necessary aids.

A long time ago, people started to realise that the computer languages they had – whether BASIC, FORTRAN or, especially, FORTH – just didn't seem to be able to do the tasks that they wanted. Rather than try to write a whole new language (which is very difficult for *anyone* to do), they patched in new instructions to the languages that they already had, to make program writing just that little bit easier.

Arnor's *Utopia*, Superpower's *Programmer's Toolbox and Basic Extensions* and Pride's *Oddjob* are all examples of such toolkit programs. The first two are available on ROM, while *Oddjob* is a disc program.

ROM software has always been costly, and so has the ROM card expansion that you need to use it. The advantage of it, though, is that programs are loaded in the moment you switch on, and they do not take any RAM space away from the system.

UTOPIA
Arnor, £29.95 ROM

This is similar in many ways to Superpower's offering, consisting of around 40 RSX's. However, the layout of commands is totally different.

There are two main groups of new commands: file-related commands that deal with the tape recorder or disc drive (assuming you have one fitted to your Amstrad); and programming instructions that diagnose just what your program is doing. There are very few commands that you can use in your own programs that do not play around with files in some way. A file is here understood to mean a list of data coming from or going to somewhere outside the computer. The file-handling commands are very comprehensive. They include many of the disc utilities that usually need to be loaded from a system disc. There are also commands to dump memory to ASCII files, to verify ASCII files, and instructions to send data from the screen to a file, plus other very useful commands.



The diagnostic/programming routines describe such things as: what arrays have been set up, and how big they are: what functions have been defined, and where they were created. In fact, a list of variables and their values can be called up with just one command. It also has Find/Replace functions, and you can move blocks of BASIC program around with it. Their are two editors available – DEDIT, which is a disc editor, and MEDIT, which is a memory editor . DEDIT reads data off the the disc, lets you edit it, and then puts the edited version back where it came from on the disc. A very useful utility this, since it will even unerase accidently wiped files.

With MEDIT , you can scan through memory, perhaps looking for a particular message. You can change any part of the Random Access Memory with it, so it would probably be of more use to a Machine Code programmer than a BASIC one.

The manual is readable, although it looks a lot less professional than Superpower's.

G O O D N E W S

▶ **Large amount of disc-related commands.**
▶ Cheaper than Superpower's.
▶ **Disable facility means it will not interfere with other ROM chips.**

B A D N E W S

▶ **Less attractive to 464 users**
▶ **No graphics commands e.g. FILL, CIRCLE etc.**
▶ **Manual is for the more technically-minded.**

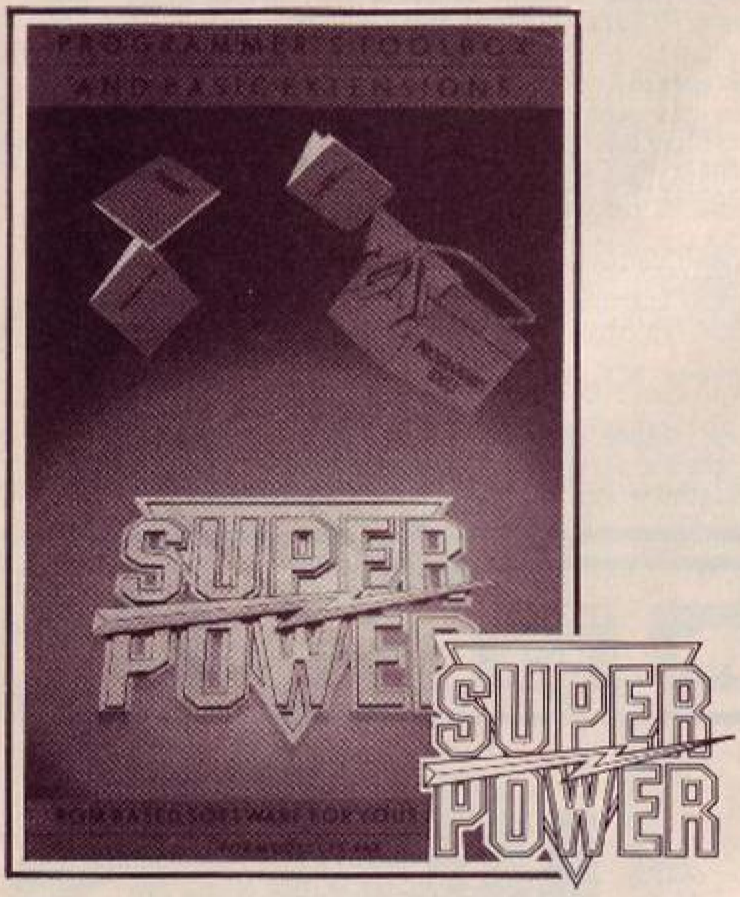
PROGRAMMER'S TOOLBOX and BASIC EXTENSIONS
Superpower, £39.95 ROM, CPC 464 only

This ROM offers around 40 extra commands and utilities, all of which are RSX's (Resident Systems Extensions) and so need a bar ("|") prefix, e.g. |FRAME.

The commands are arranged in four different categories of which the first is the actual writing and de-bugging commands to help you to find errors in your own programs. Particularly useful among these is the find/replace command, which will search through listings in much the same way as a word processor will go through a document finding one word and replacing it with ano-

ther. Other useful commands include one to trace the program currently running to the printer.

The second group of commands comprises those missing from 464 BASIC but which are present in BASIC V1.1. A program written on a 664 or 6128 (so long as it does not use too much memory) is fairly easy to translate to the 464 with these commands. However, since a program written with these RSX's will not work on a 664 or a 6128 until all the bar ("|") prefixes have been removed they are not quite the complete answer to the compatibility problem.



The ROM also contains some commands which do not exist in any form of Locomotive BASIC. These include two dump routines which take the graphics screen and dump it to either an Amstrad or an Epson printer. (An extra command, |PRINTER, selects the printer type). The problem with these commands is that if you write a program containing them, nobody else can use that program because their machines will not be able to handle the extra commands.

The last group of commands features design programs. These include a character generator and an envelope tester, and are very useful as they produce BASIC Program lines when you have finished designing. You can then put those BASIC lines in your own program, and they will recreate the sound. Much better than trial and error to find the right sound or character shape.

All the routines are well designed. The screen layouts are very good and fairly easy to grasp. If you feel at ease with most of Locomotive BASIC then you can master these with a little effort.

G O O D N E W S

► **Wide range of extra commands; it's likely you will find something that will help you.**
► **The manual is well written, explaining things very clearly.**

B A D N E W S

► **No facility to save commands, so other people cannot use your programs unless they have a copy of this ROM.**

ODDJOB
Pride Utilities, £12.95 disc

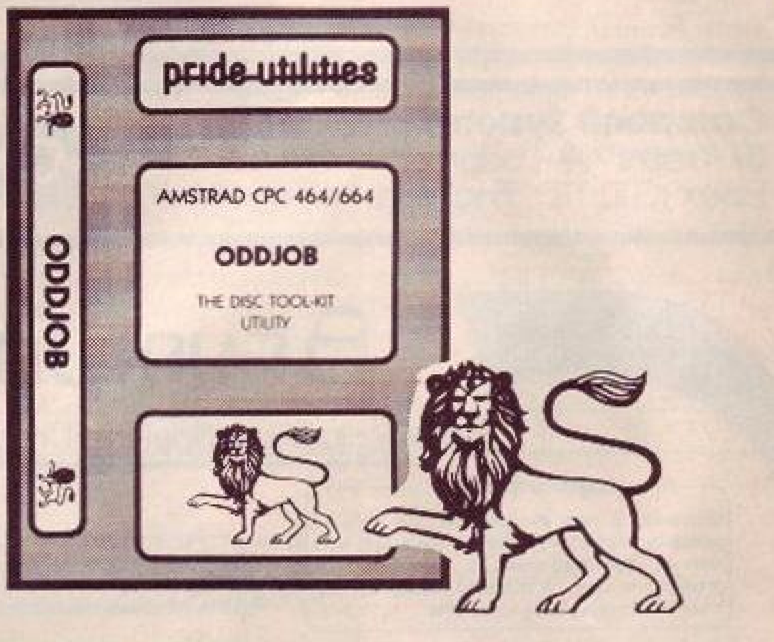
Don't be fooled by the name – this program is certainly a professional job. The disc supplies eight different easy-to-use routines of interest to anu Amstrad owner with a disc drive.

The first is a program called DIREDIT, which stands for Directory Editor. With this it is very easy to unerase discs, to rename programs, to search for hidden programs, and to generally run riot with the directory of a disc. FASTFORM, the seconf program, will format a disc something like three to four times faster than the CPM program FORMAT.

Probably the most widely used of all these programs – and probabay for all the wrong reasons – will be DISCLONE. This will produce a perfect copy of any disc for the Amstrad. More than slightly useful to pirates? Not entirely, since a clone of a protected disc is still protected – you'd have to have a utility like this one to copy it again.

The fourth and fifth programs are meant to be used together. DISCMAP says which sectors a file is occupying on the disc. With SECTEDIT, you can then edit the sectors indicated by DISCMAP.

DISCTAPE takes a file off a disc and records it onto tape. You would use it if you had written a program on disc, and you wanted to produce a tape version.



G O O D N E W S

► **If you just want a Toolkit for your disc drive, this is probably the one to go for.**
► **Supplied on disc, it does not need a ROM card expansion.**
► **Good value for money.**

B A D N E W S

► **Only eight routines supplied.**
► **No routines to use in your own programs.**

A rather special program is SPEEDISC. This increases the working speed of the disc drive by 20%. It needs no RAM space to work, and will continue working until the drive is reset again.

REMPRO is a program that could lead many disc drive ownertws into great temptaion. It simply removes protection from a disc. Back up copying a disc is one thing, but protection removal indicates another: illegal usage, either for hacking or theft.

No manual is provided, but there is an extra option – option 9, HELP – which describes each program and its use. It also states "This program must not be used to infringe copyright laws".

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Campbell Software Design

QUALITY BUSINESS SOFTWARE FOR THE AMSTRAD CPC MACHINES

MASTERCALC: Spreadsheet program with 3,000 cells, variable column formats, clever formulae, ultra fast and friendly. "Accomplishes more in RAM than xxxxxSPREAD did on disc...another exceptional utility from Campbell for the (CPC) Amstrad machines".

Featured in their Amstrad's TV advertising.

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For CPC6128 or RAM-Extended 464/664:
Special high-capacity editions are now ready which use optimised memory bank-switching.......read on ----->

MASTERFILE 128 offers 64K file, integral data export, user file processing, and file merge. (No need for MPX)

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If you already have MASTERFILE 464/MASTERCALC, **YES** we offer UPDATES: call us for details: and **YES** your old files will load into the new "128" editions.

Prices	tape / disc
MASTERFILE 464	£21.25 / £25.45
MASTERFILE + MPX	£26.25 / £29.95
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CS

BrunWord



* including a 'Spelling Check' routine!

Introduction

Brunword is now available for the Amstrad computer with many enhancements and new features. The programme is really two programmes in one – a powerful wordprocessor and a fast spelling test programme.

Spelling Check

A section of memory is allocated to the dictionary containing up to 7000 words. At the same time about 7 pages of text can be stored in the editor file area. As the dictionary is in RAM the testing is incredibly fast, taking about 8 seconds to test an A4 page. Words are flashed onto the screen as they are tested and the programme stops if the word is unknown. The word can then be stored, edited or ignored. The tape version is supplied with 4000 words (disc version 6000 words).

Security Code

A security code up to fifteen characters long can be entered and then this is used to encode all text before saving to tape or disc. This is not a toy but a highly secure system.

Wordprocessor

This is designed to be easy to use, easy to learn and yet is a comprehensive wordprocessor.

The text editor uses the CLR and DEL keys as normal and the Cursor keys with SHIFT and CTRL provide full cursor control.

Even though the exact print format can be seen in the 80 column mode (and edited in the disc version) "Brunning Software" have designed a unique formatting routine, which by entering text in the 40 column mode allows the full use of colours and full size characters. Text is typed in with the basic appearance that is required. Address on the right, "Dear Sir" on the left, "Yours sincerely" in the centre etc. When this is printed the programme works out how to maintain this same appearance for the different width enabling any width between 40 and 130 columns to be printed without reformatting and with spaces added evenly to justify the text. (Punctuation then left and right).

The ESCAPE mode provides many facilities all based on key words. Cut, paste, move, find, and files can be saved on tape or disc but can also be temporarily stored in another part of memory enabling instant access to several files.

Disc Version

This is arranged for ease of use with any Amstrad disc drive and automatically adjusts the memory for the best use. Supplied with 6000 words already in the dictionary (expandable to 10,000), which allows 8 pages of text to be in the memory at the same time. With no dictionary about 14 pages can be in memory. This version allows both 40 and 80 column editing and has a simple system for deleting files from disc.

Colour

The text that is typed into the editor is in yellow. Marked text is in red and can be blocked moved, deleted or saved. Programme menus, paragraph end markers and instructions are in blue. Special printer control instructions are in red. Pleasant to the eyes and easy to see at a glance what is happening.

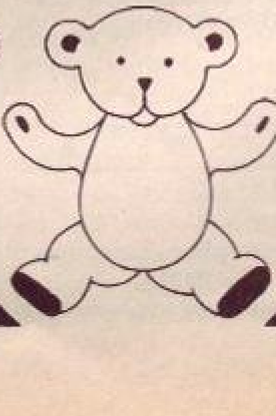
Printer

BrunWord will operate correctly with any printer that connects to the printer port. The printer control codes can be set up for any printer and are saved along with each file.

Send Cheque/Postal Order To:-

Brunning Software
34 Helston Road,
Chelmsford,
Essex,
CM1 5JF.

Telephone (0245) 252854 (24 Hours)



Tape £16.50

Disc £25.00



TAS-SPELL

Tasman Software, £16.50 disc

It would be nice to believe that a word-processor could actually improve your writing ability. Unfortunately, this just isn't true: word processors can make writing, adjusting and rephrasing a document easier, but they won't turn anyone into a literary genius.

Once that last adjustment has been made, one final stage must be completed before any document of importance can be sent out – the spelling must be checked. This not only very boring for a human being to do but is prone to human error, sloppiness and ignorance. It's a pretty hawk-eyed writer who can spot all spelling errors as well as those typing mistakes that turn 'ands' into 'adns', 'thes' into 'tehs'.

Tasman's *Tas-spell* is an impressive – if not quite total – solution to the problem. The only really bad point about it is that it will only work with Tasword 464-D or Tasword 6128. There are in fact two versions of *Tas-spell*, one on each side of the supplied disc, for *Tasword 464 D* and *Tasword 6128. People who bought Amsword* or cassette-based *Tasword* will need to upgrade to the full disc program.

The reason for this is that *Tas-spell* is supplied only on disc. And the reason why it is supplied only on disc is its sheer size – it contains over 20,000 words, or roughly 100K of data. This is pretty impressive when you consider that the average educated adult probably has a vocabulary of around 25,000 words. Trying to load such a system from tape would be far too complex; you would have to keep fast-forwarding and reversing the tape to find the right dictionary block.



To run a spelling check you first have to go from the text file to *Tasword's* main menu and press K. You then need to insert the *Tas-spell* disc in the disc drive and the program can then load.

One welcome feature of this utility is its simplicity in use. The program asks for the bare minimum of information, and then gets on with the job. On loading, the program offers just six options. Pressing Enter makes *Tas-spell* go away and check for spelling errors.

Tas-spell operates by runing 'passes' through the text. There can be up to 21 of these as the program compares each block of text with each block of its dictionary. It is as this point that you will notice that the program is not fast – don't use if you've got a long document you want to check before catching the post. When it finds a word that is not in its dictionary, it highlights the word and the lines around it and then it asks the user exactly what they want do.

The program, of course, is not 'intelligent'. It will recognise word roots, but compounds formed by means of suffixes and prefixes may lie beyond its ken. Hence, *Tas-spell* recognised 'stabilised' but not 'destabilised', which is only to be expected but is the kind of thing you need to bear in mind when using it.

On highlighting a word, *Tas-spell* offers the user three options. **L** will cause *Tas-spell* to add the word to its dictionary. In theory, since there is about 40K of space on the disc, up to 10,000 new words can be added. In practice, the maximum number of new words is about two thousand. This should be enough for anybody's needs since, after all, you can read some newspapers quite easily with just a 500 word vocabulary. Users of technical or foreign vocabulary will find this most useful.

I will make *Tas-spell* ignore a spelling. For example, if you have a lot of names in your file, and you don't want to add them to the dictionary, then this command will solve the problem.

C will allow you to change the spelling of a word if you have made a mistake. On the 464 D version, you can edit it from *Tas-spell*, but the 6128 version forces a return to *Tasword*. This may seem a little strange, but if you have made a whole series of spelling errors in succession – say you started pressing a 'p' instead of an 'o' – then it saves a lot of effort for 6128 owners. Unfortunately, it corrupts *Tasword 6128* in the process, and so once the program has had the spelling checked, *Tasword* would need to be reloaded.

Further options include a number-trapping function which, when on, will ignore words containing numbers. Numbers alone are always ignored. **S** will switch on the single letter trapping function and will reject any single letters other than 'A' or 'I'. **D** deletes words from the dictionary, while **T** will put you back into *Tasword*.

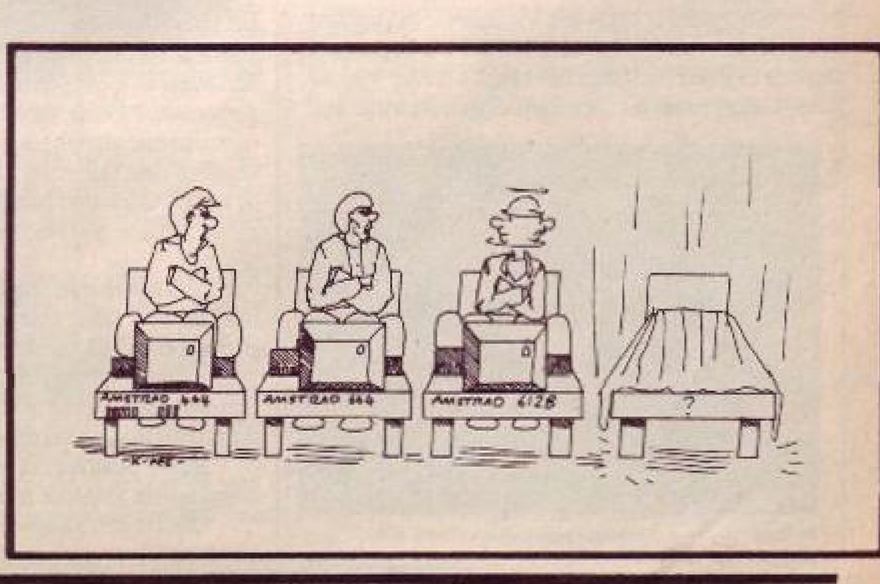
The manual states how to create your own 100K from scratch, and also how to configure the *Tasword/Tas-spell* system for Amstrads with two disc drives, so you could have *Tasword* and your text files on one drive, and *Tas-spell* on the other.

GOOD NEWS

- **Simple and easy to use.**
- **Better than *Spellstar*.**
- **Easy to add to dictionary.**

BAD NEWS

- **Only works with *Tasword* on disc.**
- **Pretty slow.**



Plumbing the depths of a software giant

THE OCEAN EMPIRE

Ocean Software represent something of an enigma. Until recently many game-players would have left them off a list of their favourite software houses, yet the company have been astonishingly successful and are now poised to unleash a flood of hot programs onto the Amstrad market (some of them under the Imagine label which Ocean owns).

At the same time the company's chairman David Ward has won a reputation as one of the most influential figures in the micro computer world. AA's Chris Anderson (one of the micro computer world's less influential figures) hijacked the early (VERY early) train to Manchester to meet the man making waves.



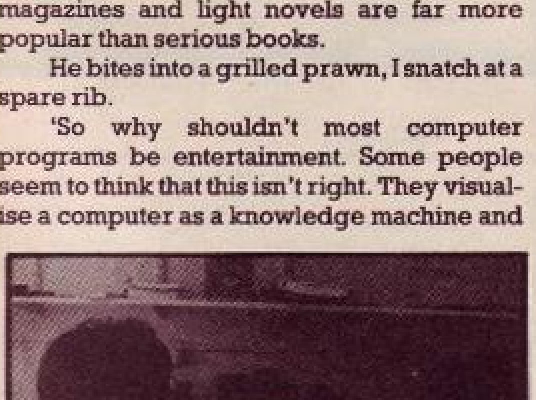
▶ The building containing the Ocean offices – it's a church!

Having a lunch interview with David Ward isn't an experience to be recommended. The man has so many quotable things to say that you simply don't get a chance to put down the pen and notebook and switch to the spare ribs.

Example. On whether it's unfortunate that home computers are used mainly for playing games: 'Before home computers came along there were three principal forms of communication in the home – audio, visual and print. The major uses for each of those are entertainment. You can use your record player to learn French, but most people prefer listening to music. Similarly TV is dominated by entertainment and so is print – magazines and light novels are far more popular than serious books.

He bites into a grilled prawn, I snatch at a spare rib.

'So why shouldn't most computer programs be entertainment. Some people seem to think that this isn't right. They visualise a computer as a knowledge machine and that gives them the feeling that they should always be doing something useful with it. It's a conundrum which has never been analysed properly.



▶ Downstairs Amstrad programmers check out progress on Yie Ar Kung Fu.

'Why shouldn't most computer programs be for entertainment?'

'The fact is that the commercial and educational market for home computer software hasn't succeeded in this country. Boots dust down their educational software every Friday. By Monday what they've shipped out is tons of games.'

He pauses while I try to catch up – the shorthand isn't what it was. I reach for the fork, but no, he has more:

'There was a prevalent view a couple years ago that unless people did serious things with computers they would go away. I think they've been proved wrong. Take two examples. Compare the BBC micro with the Amstrad. I think that Amstrad's view is that computers should be used for what people want to use them for. Alan Sugar hasn't tried to make the most technically advanced computer – he's not on a mission to educate the world.

'It's not the stuff legends are made of, and maybe the BBC micro is. But look at it. 100 ports along the back that no one will ever use and a price tag to match. The 128K version costs what, £600. It's not hard to see why Amstrad is now more successful.'

But, I ponder, does that mean that home computers are just time wasters?

'Not at all. The nature of computer entertainment has changed a good deal in the last year or two. Some of the games being produced now are quite fantastic. I think it's much more laudable to spend two hours on Frankie Goes to Hollywood (*one of the new Ocean titles*) than to watch Coronation Street. It's a much more intellectually stimulating and rewarding exercise.

'What makes it different is that it's an interactive process. It's much more like the process of reading a book. And computer games still have a long way to go, especially on disk. The Amstrad 6128 could play a very important part here. It's the first cheap home computer to have a built-in disk drive and it could open up a whole new world for game-players.



▶ Paul Finnegan,
'Yie Ar Kung Fu's the best game I've ever seen'

'Until now British software houses haven't developed games specifically for disk-drive owners, they've just converted the cassette versions. This 6128 could change all that. You'll start getting huge interactive adventures with several hundred K of code written specially for the machine. Games which just couldn't be done on cassette.'

It is evident that a considerable amount of time at Ocean is spent predicting the future. Inside the office building, situated in the heart of gothic Manchester, is a door which

> 'The Amstrad 6128 could open up a whole new world for game-players.'

visitors are not shown through. 'Sorry,' said David, 'that's our project for next year.' Still, the visitable areas are revealing enough.

Once past the reception area with its tank of 13 goldfish and friendly receptionist Clare (well, she's not in the tank), you find a suite of around a dozen semi-partitioned offices. These include an art studio where all the company's numerous ads are produced, and



▶ David Ward: Shhhh, it's off the record.

a music room where the nephew of famous flautist James Galway puts together the program sound-tracks.

David Ward's own office is notable for the reading matter in evidence. This includes an intriguing little journal called Licensing Report ('the monthly bulletin of character merchandising'), essential reading for someone constantly trying to keep his finger (and chequebook) on the pulse of the latest fads – almost all Ocean's titles are designed to have a strong hook into the popular imagination.

The programming takes place downstairs, but you would be disappointed if you expected to find rows of hard-working programmers on site. Only a handful work for Ocean full-time. The rest of the company's vast output is produced by freelance teams situated around the country. About 60 outside programmers are engaged at any one time, a situation which says a lot about the way the home computer scene has changed in the last couple years.

> 'At shows our programmers get pounced on by every other software house.'

'It used to be the case that successful programs could be written by a single person directly on the machine they'd be released on. By and large that isn't true any more. Games get written on large-memory development machines using development software tools. You need to create cells of programmers to do this effectively.'

Apart from a few well-publicised exceptions such as Denton Designs (programmers of *Frankie*) Ocean will not reveal who produces their programs. This is to prevent them being head-hunted by other software houses. 'It's happening all the time. When we go to shows every programmer is pounced on by every other software house. There's nothing you can do about it. We've even had our van drivers approached.'

Ocean started out in the early days of the home computer boom as a mail order company. But when the High Street stores began



▶ Artist Stephen Blower working on advertisements

stocking software the mail order business disappeared virtually overnight and the company engineered a timely switch into software publishing.

One big change since then is that program production has become vastly more complex. Instead of just a tape in a box, you have to produce three different versions for three different machines, and in both cassette and disk formats. For each different package, instructions need altering and in most cases these have to be translated into four different languages for the booming European market.

Add to that the problems of coordinating the production of advertisements and the selling of the programs to distributors and it's not hard to see why most software managers are busy people.

Still, at Ocean business is booming. 'Our sales in Europe this year will be about as much as our entire business last year. This Christmas is going to be phenomenal.'

But what about the stagnation of the home computer market that everyone was talking about a while back? 'I know it sounds fatuous, but we've never been affected by that at all. Every month has been better than the last. Obviously growth can't go on like that for ever – in fact this year for the first time we found that June and July had a bit of a dip. But until then every single month we've been in business has been better than the one before.'

The further sayings of David Ward

On British ingenuity: *'We can't make railway engines any more but we can use our education and culture to create interesting software of all kinds. I'm not saying this is some kind of great cause. We do it to make money.'*

On European sales: *'About a quarter of our stuff goes abroad. We ought to get the Queen's award for exports.'*

On future prices: *'The time may come when you can buy a 1000K machine with built-in disk drive for £200. But you may then have to pay £50 for each piece of software to run on it.'*

On future software development: *'New techniques are being developed to help us write very large programs very quickly. You couldn't have created Frankie on the Spectrum two years ago.'*

On the advantages of being Ocean's size: *'There's no politics here, we're too small. You pass everyone else in the corridor 25 times a day.'*

On developing new programs: *'Our business is all about being able to react quickly. If you want to make a game about some contemporary aspect of British life you have to move fast.'*

On working in the software scene: *'I think it's the most exciting thing you can do. We are directly involved in the sharp end of technology. I really love it.'*

The big Christmas releases

Here's a rundown of the games which Ocean hope will take the Amstrad Christmas market by storm. They fall into several categories.

First there are a range of games being released under the Imagine label which are conversions of hits from the coin-op arcades. The one Ocean seem most excited about is **YIE AR KUNG FU** reviewed in this issue. But there are also **HYPERSPORTS** (whose release was delayed over a month), **PING PONG** and **MY KAE** with **COMIC BAKERY** to follow soon after.

Second are a series of games linked to TV series, **KNIGHT RIDER**, **STREET HAWKE** and **V**. All three are being produced by the same team of programmers.

Third are a pair of text-entry adventures – a new departure for Ocean. The very pretty **NEVERENDING STORY**, based on the recent film, is reviewed in this issue. It's being followed by **HUNCHBACK THE ADVENTURE** giving a new non-arcade lease of life to Quasimodo.

The sports simulations **MATCHDAY** and **WORLD SERIES BASEBALL**, although released well before Christmas are expected to keep the coffers ticking over during the holiday period.

Another very big release is **FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**, a program combining big name sponsorship with sophisticated gameplay.

Wrapping up the massive Christmas lineup is a new shoot-em-up called **N.O.M.A.D.**, fast action set in a futuristic city.

DESIGN YOUR OWN GRAPHICS!

A great type-in utility to allow you super-fast graphic symbol creation

This classy listing is going to appeal to two sorts of people. On one level it can be used for some enjoyable doodling as a clever little art program. But it can also be put to very sophisticated use by anyone wanting to create their own graphic symbols for use in programs – hence the program's title User Defined Graphics.

If you're a programmer you'll know that the computer stores letters, punctuation symbols and various other graphic shapes coded with numbers ranging from 33 to 255 (the so-called ASCII codes). You can print these on screen using the command CHR$. For example PRINT CHR$(65) will print the letter A.

What this listing does is to allow you to redefine the graphic shape associated with each of these numbers. So if you wanted to change the shape of the "a" or turn it into a little space-ship or a telephone or a face, this program will let you do that very easily. You could use it to design a new character set which you could load in and run every time you got tired of the type of print Arnold normally uses. Or, if you don't want to mess around with the keyboard, you can simply define graphic shapes for the numbers above 128 and then make use of these in your own programs – once you're happy with the shapes you've created, this listing will actually create the program lines needed to generate them again instantly whenever needed.

Many thanks (and a nice cheque) to the author, DAVID MUIR of Plymouth.

Program instructions

When the program is run a grid of nine large squares is displayed on screen. Each of these represents a single user-defined graphic and is further divided into a grid of 64 small squares. There is a cursor in the grid top left. To the right is a block of nine numbers which is simply a guide to the numbering of the large squares.

The cursor can be moved around the grid with the cursor keys. If the COPY key is pushed then the small square at the cursor position will be filled if empty, or emptied if filled. If SHIFT is pressed while using the cursor keys, a continuous drawing (or erasing) effect is possible.

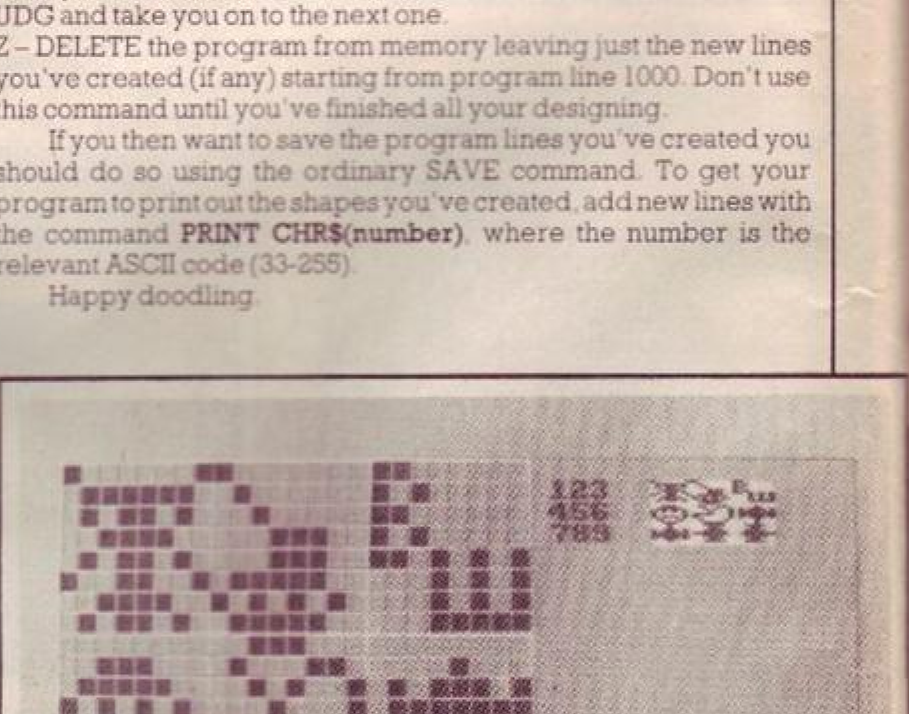
There are a host of commands to save you time. As a general rule, there are two types of command: a small letter + number (1-9) operates on the specified large square, while a capital letter operates on the whole grid.

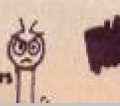
E – EMPTY the whole grid.
F – FILL the whole grid.
H – horizontally MIRROR grid.
V – vertically mirror grid.
A – ROTATE grid 90 degrees anti-clockwise.
C – rotate grid 90 degrees clockwise.
The commands e,f,h,v,a and c followed by a number (1-9) have the equivalent effect to the above on the specified UDG square.

U(number) – MOVE the whole grid design up the specified number of squares.
D(number) – the same, but down.
L(number) – the same, but left.
R(number) – the same, but right.
m(number 1)(number 2) – COPY the contents of UDG square 1 to square 2.
P(0-2) – PICTURE the grid design. This reveals what the grid would look like in each of the three graphics modes 0-2.
N – CREATE program lines to store your UDGs. For each of the nine in turn you will be asked if you want to save it. Answer "Y" and you are asked to input the ASCII code number you want to store it under (33-255). If you press ENTER here instead of a number, the program will store the first UDG at 255, the next at 254 and so on. Next you are asked to press 0 on the numeric keypad to store the UDG and take you on to the next one.
Z – DELETE the program from memory leaving just the new lines you've created (if any) starting from program line 1000. Don't use this command until you've finished all your designing.

If you then want to save the program lines you've created you should do so using the ordinary SAVE command. To get your program to print out the shapes you've created, add new lines with the command **PRINT CHR$(number)**, where the number is the relevant ASCII code (33-255).

Happy doodling.





```
5 '  UDG
6 'DMUIR85
7 '*** DO NOT CHANGE LINE NUMBERS !!! ***
10 GOTO 290
15 a(t,u,v,w)=1-a(t,u,v,w):GOTO 30
20 LOCATE x,y:PEN 0:PRINT CHR$(254);:LOCATE x,y:PEN 1:PRINT CHR$(255);:RETURN
25 CLS #3:PRINT #3, "Next?"+CHR$(7)
30 a$=INKEY$:IF a$="" THEN 30 ELSE IF a$="h" OR a$="v" OR a$="a" OR a$="c" THEN
75 ELSE IF a$="H" OR a$="V" OR a$="A" OR a$="C" OR a$="L" OR a$="R" OR a$="U" OR
 a$="D" THEN 130
35 IF a$="F" OR a$="E" THEN 190 ELSE IF a$="f" OR a$="e" THEN 195 ELSE a=ASC(a$)
:IF a=&E0 THEN 15
40 IF (a>&EF AND a<&F4) THEN 45 ELSE IF UPPER$(a$)="M" THEN 215 ELSE IF (a>&F3 A
ND a<&F8) THEN 70 ELSE IF UPPER$(a$)="P" THEN 265 ELSE IF UPPER$(a$)="N" THEN 33
5 ELSE IF UPPER$(a$)="Z" THEN 260 ELSE GOTO 30
45 PEN (a(t,u,v,w)):LOCATE x,y:PRINT CHR$(254);:PEN 1
50 x=x-1*(a=&F3 AND x<24)+1*(a=&F2 AND x>1)
55 y=y-1*(a=&F1 AND y<24)+1*(a=&F0 AND y>1)
```

```
60 v=INT((x-1)/8)+1:w=INT((y-1)/8)+1:t=x-8*(v-1):u=y-8*(w-1)
65 LOCATE x,y:PEN 0:PRINT CHR$(254);:LOCATE x,y:PEN 1:PRINT CHR$(255);:GOTO 30
70 a(t,u,v,w)=1-a(t,u,v,w):a=a-4:GOTO 45
75 CLS #3: PRINT #3,"Square Num?"+CHR$(7)
80 q$=INKEY$:IF q$="" THEN 80 ELSE IF (q$>"9" OR q$<"1") THEN 80 ELSE q=VAL(q$):
CLS #3
85 p=INT((q-1)/3)+1:q=q-((p-1)*3)
90 FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:c(i,j)=a(i,j,q,p):NEXT:NEXT
95 IF a$="h" THEN FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:a(i,j,q,p)=c(9-i,j):NEXT:NEXT
100 IF a$="v" THEN FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:a(i,j,q,p)=c(i,9-j):NEXT:NEXT
105 IF a$="a" THEN FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:a(i,j,q,p)=c(9-j,i):NEXT:NEXT
110 IF a$="c" THEN FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:a(i,j,q,p)=c(j,9-i):NEXT:NEXT
```

```
115 f=(p-1)*8:e=(q-1)*8
120 FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:LOCATE e+i,f+j:PEN (a(i,j,q,p)):PRINT CHR$(254);:N
EXT:NEXT:GOSUB 20
125 GOTO 25
130 CLS #3:PRINT #3, "Compiling...":FOR h=1 TO 3:FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 3:FOR k
=1 TO 8:b(k+(j-1)*8,i+(h-1)*8)=a(k,i,j,h):NEXT:NEXT:SOUND 1,478,1:NEXT:NEXT
131 IF a$="L" OR a$="R" OR a$="U" OR a$="D" THEN 152
135 IF a$="H" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=b(25-i,j):NEXT:SOUND 1,329,1:NEXT
140 IF a$="V" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=b(i,25-j):NEXT:SOUND 1,329,1:NEXT
145 IF a$="A" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=b(25-j,i):NEXT:SOUND 1,329,1:NEXT
150 IF a$="C" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=b(j,25-i):NEXT:SOUND 1,329,1:NEXT
151 GOTO 175
152 CLS #3:PRINT #3,"Number 1-7";CHR$(7);
153 q$=INKEY$:IF q$>"7" OR q$<"1" THEN 153 ELSE q=VAL(q$):CLS #3:PRINT #3, "Comp
iling..."
155 IF a$="L" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=-b(i+q+24*(i>24-q),j)*(i<25-q):NEXT:SOUN
D 1,329,1:NEXT
160 IF a$="R" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=-b(i-q-24*(i<q+1),j)*(i>q):NEXT:SOUND 1,
329,1:NEXT
```

```
165 IF a$="D" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=-b(i,j-q-24*(j<q+1))*(j>q):NEXT:SOUND 1,
329,1:NEXT
170 IF a$="U" THEN FOR i=1 TO 24:FOR j=1 TO 24:e=INT((i-1)/8)+1:f=i-((e-1)*8):g=
INT((j-1)/8)+1:h=j-((g-1)*8):a(f,h,e,g)=-b(i,j+q+24*(j>24-q))*(j<25-q):NEXT:SOUN
D 1,329,1:NEXT
175 CLS #3:FOR h=1 TO 3:FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 3:FOR k=1 TO 8:LOCATE k+(j-1)*8,
i+(h-1)*8:PEN a(k,i,j,h):PRINT CHR$(254);
180 NEXT:NEXT:NEXT:NEXT:GOSUB 20
185 GOTO 25
190 CLS #3:n=-1*(a$="F"):FOR h=1 TO 3:FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 3:FOR k=1 TO 8:LOC
ATE k+(j-1)*8,i+(h-1)*8:PEN n:PRINT CHR$(254);:a(k,i,j,h)=n:NEXT:NEXT:NEXT:NEXT:
GOSUB 20:GOTO 25
195 CLS #3:PRINT #3,"Square Num?"+CHR$(7)
200 q$=INKEY$:IF q$="" THEN 200 ELSE IF q$>"9" OR q$<"1" THEN 200 ELSE q=VAL(q$)
:n=-1*(a$="f"):CLS #3
205 p=INT((q-1)/3)+1:q=q-((p-1)*3):p1=(p-1)*8:q1=(q-1)*8
210 FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:LOCATE q1+i,p1+j:a(i,j,q,p)=n:PEN n:PRINT CHR$(254
);:NEXT:NEXT:GOSUB 20:GOTO 25
215 CLS #3:PRINT #3,"From (Num)?"+CHR$(7)
220 q$=INKEY$:IF q$="" THEN 220 ELSE IF q$>"9" OR q$<"1" THEN 220 ELSE q1=VAL(q$)
```

```
225 CLS #3:PRINT #3,"To (Num)?"+CHR$(7)
230 q$=INKEY$:IF q$="" THEN 230 ELSE IF q$>"9" OR q$<"1" THEN 230 ELSE q2=VAL(q$
):IF q2=q1 THEN 215
235 CLS #3:p1=INT((q1-1)/3)+1:q1=q1-((p1-1)*3):p2=INT((q2-1)/3)+1:q2=q2-((p2-1)*
3)
240 FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:a(i,j,q2,p2)=a(i,j,q1,p1):NEXT:NEXT
245 f=(p2-1)*8:e=(q2-1)*8
250 FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 8:LOCATE e+i,f+j:PEN(a(i,j,q2,p2)):PRINT CHR$(254);:
NEXT:NEXT:GOSUB 20
255 GOTO 25
260 CLS:DELETE -530:END
265 CLS #3:PRINT #3,"Mode Num?"+CHR$(7)
270 ORIGIN 480,382:q$=INKEY$:IF q$="" THEN 270 ELSE IF q$>"2" OR q$<"0" THEN 270
 ELSE q=VAL(q$):CLS #1:CLS #3
275 IF q=1 THEN FOR h=1 TO 3:FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 3:FOR k=1 TO 8: PLOT 2*((j-
1)*8+k-1),-2*((h-1)*8+i-1),1-1*(a(k,i,j,h)=0):NEXT:NEXT:NEXT:NEXT:GOTO 25
280 IF q=2 THEN FOR h=1 TO 3:FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 3:FOR k=1 TO 8: PLOT 2*((j-
1)*8+k-1),-4*((h-1)*8+i-1),a(k,i,j,h):DRAWR 0,2,1-1*(a(k,i,j,h)=0):NEXT:NEXT:NEX
T:NEXT:GOTO 25
285 IF q=0 THEN FOR h=1 TO 3:FOR i=1 TO 8:FOR j=1 TO 3:FOR k=1 TO 8: PLOT 4*((j-
1)*8+k-1),-2*((h-1)*8+i-1),a(k,i,j,h):DRAWR 2,0,1-1*(a(k,i,j,h)=0):NEXT:NEXT:NEX
T:NEXT:GOTO 25
```

```
290 DIM a(8,8,3,3),b(24,24),c(8,8),d(8,8):x=1:y=1:t=1:u=1:v=1:w=1:linum=1000:ch=
255
295 MODE 1:INK 1,1:INK 0,21:INK 3,11:INK 2,24:BORDER 11:CLS:ORIGIN 0,15
300 FOR i=0 TO 384 STEP 16:MOVE 0,i:DRAWR 384,0,3:MOVE i,0:DRAWR 0,384,3:NEXT
305 FOR i=0 TO 384 STEP 128:MOVE 0,i:DRAWR 384,0,2:MOVE i,0:DRAWR 0,384,2:NEXT
310 FOR i=0 TO 2:FOR j=1 TO 3:LOCATE 25+j,i+2:PRINT CHR$(48+j+i*3):NEXT:NEXT
315 WINDOW #1,30,40,1,8:WINDOW #2,26,40,9,25:WINDOW #3,26,40,23,25
320 PAPER #3,0:CLS #3
325 SYMBOL AFTER 126:SYMBOL 254,0,127,127,127,127,127,127,127:SYMBOL 255,0,85,42
,85,42,85,42,85
330 PRINT CHR$(22)+CHR$(1):LOCATE 1,1:PRINT CHR$(255);:GOTO 25
335 CLS #3:PRINT #3,"Compiling...":FOR h=1 TO 3:FOR i=1 TO 3:FOR j=1 TO 8:l=0:FO
R k=1 TO 8
340 l=2*l+a(k,j,i,h):NEXT
345 d((h-1)*3+i-1,j)=l:NEXT:SOUND 1,478,1:NEXT:NEXT
350 i=0
355 i=i+1:CLS #2:PRINT #2, "(";i;")":PRINT #2:FOR j=1 TO 8
```

```
360 PRINT #2,d(i-1,j):NEXT
365 CLS #3:PRINT #3, "Save?"+CHR$(7)
370 a$=INKEY$:a$=UPPER$(a$):IF a$="Y" THEN 385 ELSE IF a$<>"N" THEN 370
375 CLS #3
380 IF i<9 THEN 355 ELSE CLS #2:GOTO 25
385 CLS #3:PRINT #3,"Char Number?"+CHR$(7)
390 INPUT #3,a$:IF a$="" THEN IF ch=33 THEN 385 ELSE linum=linum+10:char=ch:ch=c
h-1:GOTO 405
392 IF LEN(a$)>3 THEN 385 ELSE flag=0:FOR j=1 TO LEN(a$):IF MID$(a$,j,1)>"9" OR
MID$(a$,j,1)<"0" THEN flag=1
395 NEXT:IF flag=1 THEN 385 ELSE IF VAL(a$)<33 OR VAL(a$)>255 THEN 385
400 char=VAL(a$):ch=char:ch=ch-1:linum=linum+10
405 m$=STR$(linum)+"symbol "+STR$(char)+","+STR$(d(i-1,1))+","+STR$(d(i-1,2))+",
"+STR$(d(i-1,3))+","+STR$(d(i-1,4))+","+STR$(d(i-1,5))+","+STR$(d(i-1,6))+","+ST
R$(d(i-1,7))+","+STR$(d(i-1,8))+CHR$(13)
410 m$=m$+"WINDOW SWAP 0,3:key 128,chr$(48):GOTO 380"+CHR$(13)
415 KEY 128,m$:PRINT #3,"0 On Pad When"+CHR$(7):WINDOW SWAP 0,3:END
530 REM BREAK POINT
1000 SYMBOL AFTER 33
1010 SYMBOL  33, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
```

REWARD

We're offering anything between £50 and £100 to readers who submit listings that are printed in Amstrad Action. Ideally, any programs you submit should be pretty short so that a print-out does not fill more than two pages at the most.

We're particularly interested in short utility programs that other readers will find easy to key in and useful or informative to run. But if you're a games writer, don't despair – if your program is top quality and not too long it stands a good chance of being accepted.

Submissions should be on tape or disc, accompanied by a print-out and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send them to: **Listings Editor, Amstrad Action, Valeside, Somerton, Somerset T11 7PS.**

THE ALL-ACTION REVIEWING SYSTEM

ACTION TEST

There's some hot stuff around this Yuletide, which resulted in a tense struggle for the coveted Mastergame spot. In the end the long-awaited *Hypersports* just lost out to the smashing *Yie-Ar Kung Fu*.

Once again each game has been given the works – by that I mean Bob Wade, followed by a Second Opinion. What's new is the *Voice of the People* page, where you get your chance to air your views of our reviews. Keep those letters coming!

Once again the unique AA reviewing system has sorted the wheat from the chaff – for an explanation of how we do it, see below.

Page after page of sensational game reviews



1. EXPERT GAMEPLAY. No game gets written up until it's had a long and thorough test. Take software editor Bob Wade. Despite his tender years (not to mention sore trigger finger), he's pretty deadly with a joystick and happens to have played virtually every Amstrad game ever released. As they say down these parts, BW reaches the parts other reviewers can't touch.

2. EXTRA OPINIONS. It's always dangerous to rely on just one reviewer – tastes vary enormously. So all the games we review get looked at by at least two people, many of them by three. Not only does this mean you can read an additional view under the 'Second opinion' heading, it also means that our ratings are more reliable, because they're arrived at by a process of debate among those concerned.

Incidentally we're now extending this principle even further by seeking out YOUR opinions and ratings on new games. Read the Ed lines page for details of a scheme which will turn our review pages into a living forum of Amstrad owners.

3. LABELLED SCREEN SHOTS. It's obviously important to print screen-shots, but often they can be hard to make sense of. Labelling the different elements can make all the difference (even though the art department kick up an incredible fuss about the extra work—oh, they do.)

4. CLEAR SUMMARIES. Ever read a review where you ended up pretty unsure of the reviewer's overall opinion? To make our own views absolutely clear we include a concise summary of them under the Good news/Bad news headings.

5. RATINGS BOXES. We rate our games using percentages for extra flexibility and precision. And with so many games to work through, it's a help to be able to see at a glance which are good and which aren't. Our ratings boxes do this – just look out for those featuring long bars with dark tips!

Compatibility

With the exception of *Sabre Wulf* and *Dogsbody* the games in this issue are compatible across the Amstrad range – 464, 664 and 6128.

Where we have been unable to test the games ourselves on all machines we have extracted solemn promises from the software houses concerned.

AA Ratings – how they work – AA Ratings

We've come up with five different headings which, we reckon, cover all that's important about a game. The most important is the final one which represents our overall assessment of it. Games which score 80% or higher earn the much sought after label of AA RAVE, while the highest rated game in any month becomes our MASTERGAME – we go through agonies before selecting that one.

The ratings categories are meant to be fairly self-explanatory, but that wasn't why we didn't print anything about them last issue – we just ran out of space! So here are the missing explanations. Hopefully you'll agree our categories make a refreshing change from the usual.

GRAPHICS is the first category. Basically, this means..er..what the game looks like; colour, definition, animation, imagination. It's safe to say that monochrome Noughts and Crosses will score fairly low.

SONICS next. Sweet music, horrible noise, silence, all will be rated on quality and quantity. This rating involves the use of ears.

GRAB FACTOR We think you'll like this one. Does the game really GRAB you? Are you hooked? Will you miss an episode of The Archers to play it? High Grab Factor means that the whole office abandons work, Bob Wade whoops with delight and even the publisher looks mildly pleased. 100% means the game is more addictive than cider.

STAYING POWER You may have got the habit, but how long are you going to keep it? Staying Power tells you how often you're likely to return to a game. That depends on such matters as the number of screens and levels, the variety of the task, the degree of long-term challenge. An addictive game with only a couple of screens to it will get a high Grab Factor and low Staying Power, one with a 1000-screen playing area but lacking in playability would be the other way round.

AA RATING Nothing to do with cars. This is the result of a very hard sum involving all the other ratings, plus factors like price, quality of packaging and instructions, reliability and any other relevant factors we can think of. You won't go far wrong with any game over 80%.

CHIMERA

Firebird, £3.95 cass, joystick or keys



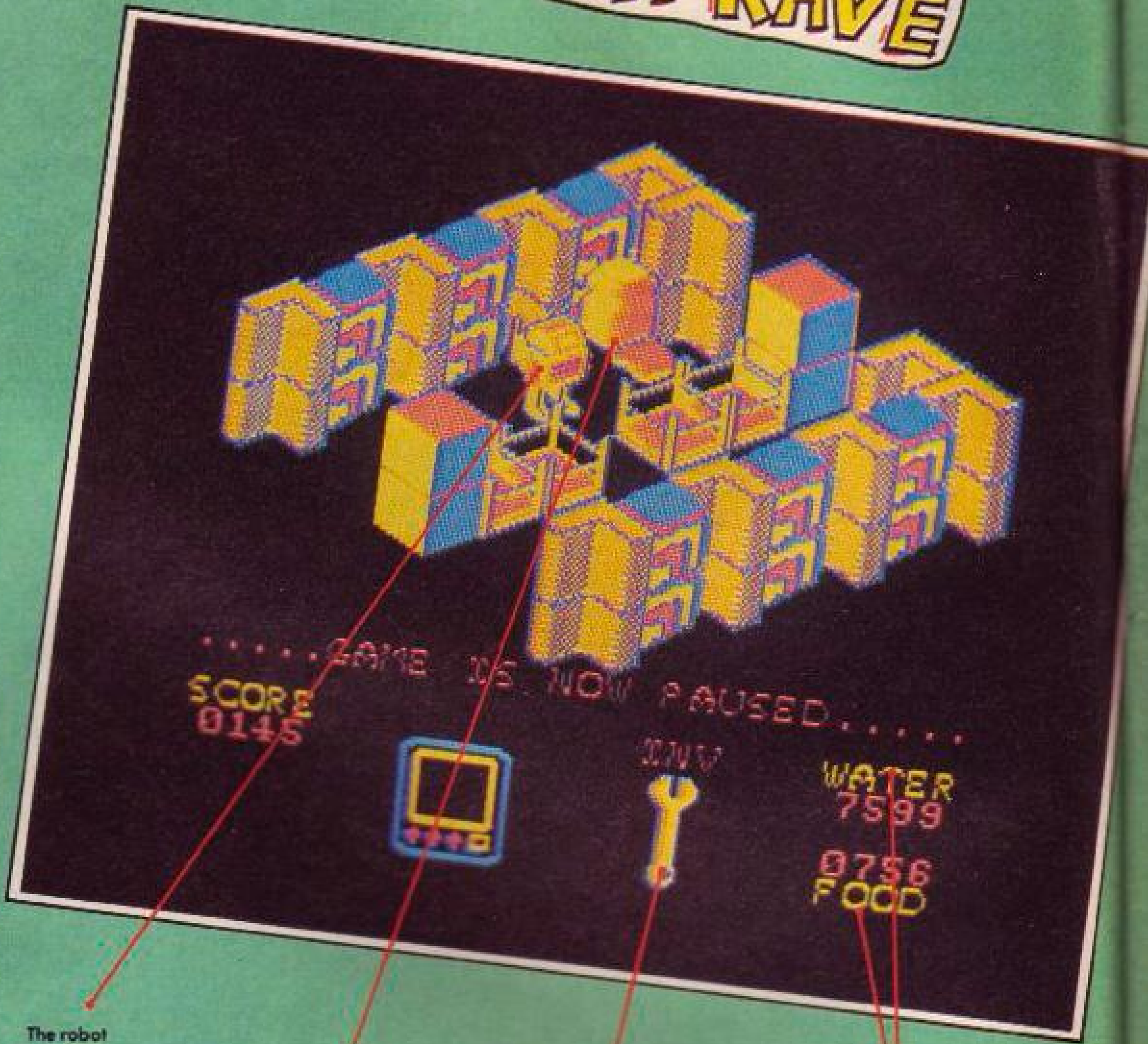
Pronounced 'kymeera', this oddly-titled game is an arcade adventure set aboard an alien spaceship. In both scenario and appearance it is reminiscent of *Alien 8* with a similar little robot who trundles around a 3D ship trying to initiate a self-destruct sequence and then escape before it explodes.

Self-destruct is initiated by a four stage sequence. Each stage is completed by using a number of objects, but you've got to work out what to do with them. The only other thing you're told is that the first object you need to use is a spanner.

SECOND OPINION

A little joystick programming hitch had me wandering around left when I pressed up, right when I pressed left and so on. But once I corrected that I found Chimera to be a very classy game and excellent value at the price. It really does require some powerful deductive skills to figure out not just what objects do individually, but in what order they are most effective. Arcade action is thin on the ground, so steer clear if you want to kill things. One thing I would have liked to see is a more detailed scenario, however nonsensical, to explain how I got in this mess in the first place. But you can't have everything for £3.95.

PC



The robot

Bread

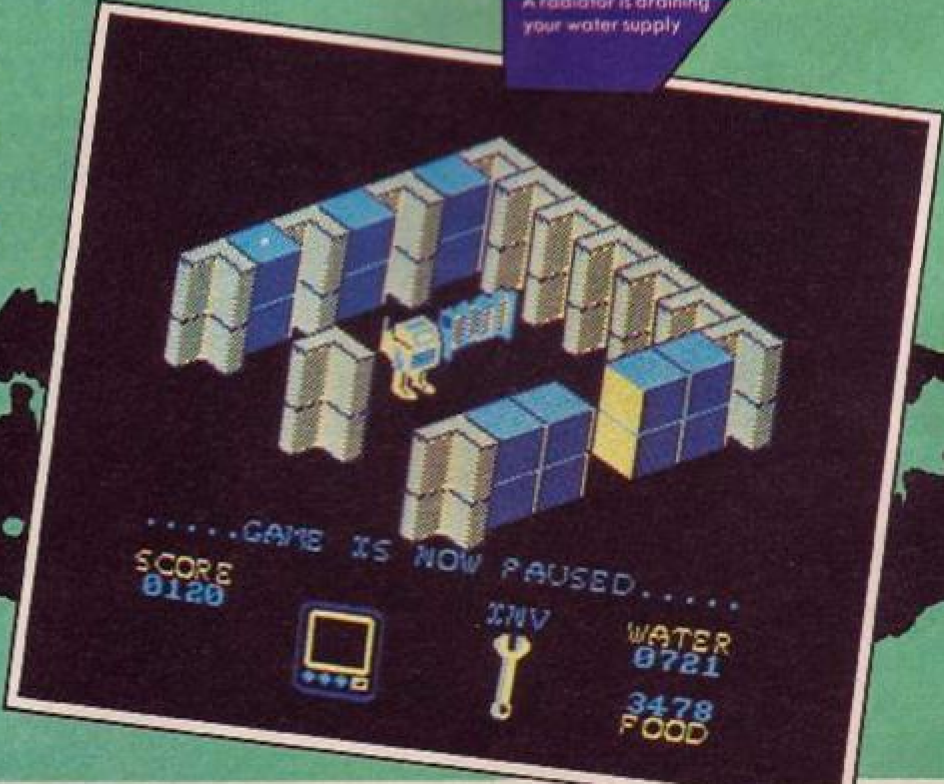
Spanner

Food and water supplies

The robot you control is a chunky little fellow who moves diagonally in four directions on screen. The screens are in 3D and the perspective means they are diamond shaped. Within the rooms is a marvellous assortment of obstacles, objects and dangers, all well designed and colourful. The screens are connected by doorways so that walking through a blank area of the room will flick you to another location. The robot can walk in front of and behind other features but because he can't jump he doesn't walk on them.

The task before him is mainly one of puzzling in the true arcade adventure sense and very little arcade skill is required, although moving him around and into gaps can be tricky. It follows a basic pattern of picking up

A radiator is draining your water supply



an object and using it to open up a new area of the ship, combine with another object or provide information or energy.

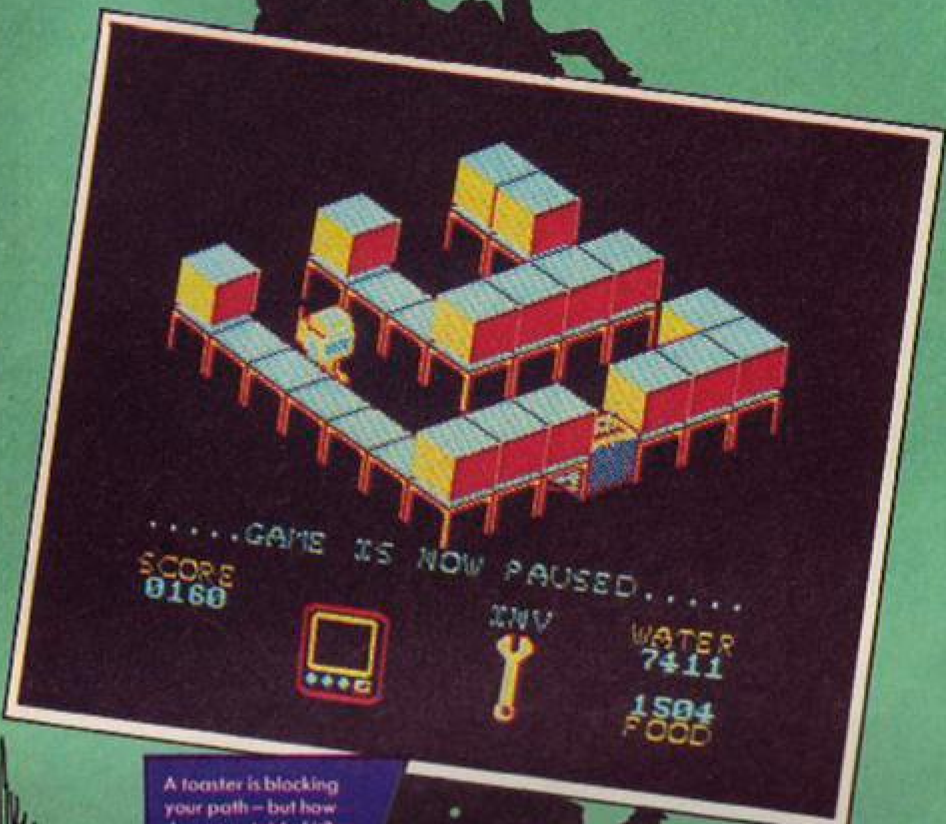
The robot has two ways of dying – either by his food and water running out or by trying to perform an action at the wrong stage of the game. Food and water supplies are shown on two separate gauges which continuously diminish. These run out faster in certain situations which you will rapidly become familiar with. Rooms with radiators affect the water supply which starts to shoot down very fast. They should be avoided whenever possible.

There are additional supplies lying around the ship in the form of bread and mugs of drink but these are limited in availability and should not be wasted since they may have other uses. If either of the supplies reaches zero you have to start all over again. Other useful objects are small computer terminals that provide information on your next task, but again they should be saved until you're really in need of help.

Many blocks will be found in your path: electric fences, locked doors, hourglasses and even the odd toaster. These can all be dealt with by walking up to them with the right object and using it. If, however, you have the wrong object then you'll probably cash in your chips and have to start again. Many objects, including food and water, may be masked by other bits of the scenery so that the robot will have to search about behind some areas to find things.

When you succeed in achieving something a scrolling message informs you of it and sometimes tells you what you should do next. Under this scrolling message area is the status box showing food and water supply, what you're carrying and the score.

BW



A toaster is blocking your path – but how do you get rid of it?

GOOD NEWS

- **64 colourful screens.**
- **Many difficult puzzles to solve.**
- **Alien 8-type graphics with more adventure.**
- **Excellent graphics and character.**
- **Nice price.**
- **Tougher and prettier than most games twice the price.**

BAD NEWS

- **Looks very Ultimateish.**
- **Will prove frustrating if you get stuck.**

GRAPHICS	84%
SONICS	61%
GRAB FACTOR	88%
STAYING POWER	89%
A A RATING	88%

Cryptic Chimera

There are some complicated puzzles in the game and we didn't want to give too much away, but here are some clues that may help you out if you get stuck.

1.You've heard of throwing a spanner in the works – well this one can make sparks fly.

2.Don't waste good cooking heat, give it something to work on.

3.The companion to a nut will provide a killer head.

4.Task number one is completed in a sad room.

MEXICO '86

Qualsoft, £9.95 cass (mail order only), keys only

Computer football games just keep getting more popular, perhaps in inverse proportion to the number of people actually going to live games. In the last three months we've had two strategy games, two arcade games and one combination on the subject and with World Cup fever rising the pace isn't likely to drop.

This is an all-out strategy effort that certainly isn't aimed at the pretty graphics end of the market but, as the programmers put it, "the intelligent adult". It comes in a twin cassette pack with one tape for the qualifying games and one for the finals themselves for which you'll need a saved game from the completed qualifying section.

The game arrives accompanied by a letter explaining some details and philosophy behind the game and a detailed instruction booklet with plenty of background information and suggestions. The game can be played on five different difficulty levels and with varying levels of complication in your job. You don't have to worry about money in this game – just which eleven players to pick for each game, where and how to play them.

The qualifying tape includes five friendly matches followed by the qualifying tournament. The game begins with decisions on various levels of skill and features. There are five skill levels, three of which give you an advantage, one even and one where you are at a disadvantage. You next have to choose one of three "dimensions" which determine how much care will have to be taken when choosing your team.

Dimension one will judge players purely on whether they are goalkeepers, defenders, midfield or attack, whereas two will introduce a system whereby a players suitability for playing on the left, right or centre is considered. Dimension three goes even further and analyses the blend of the team's skills to see if you have the right balance of goal scorers and goal makers.

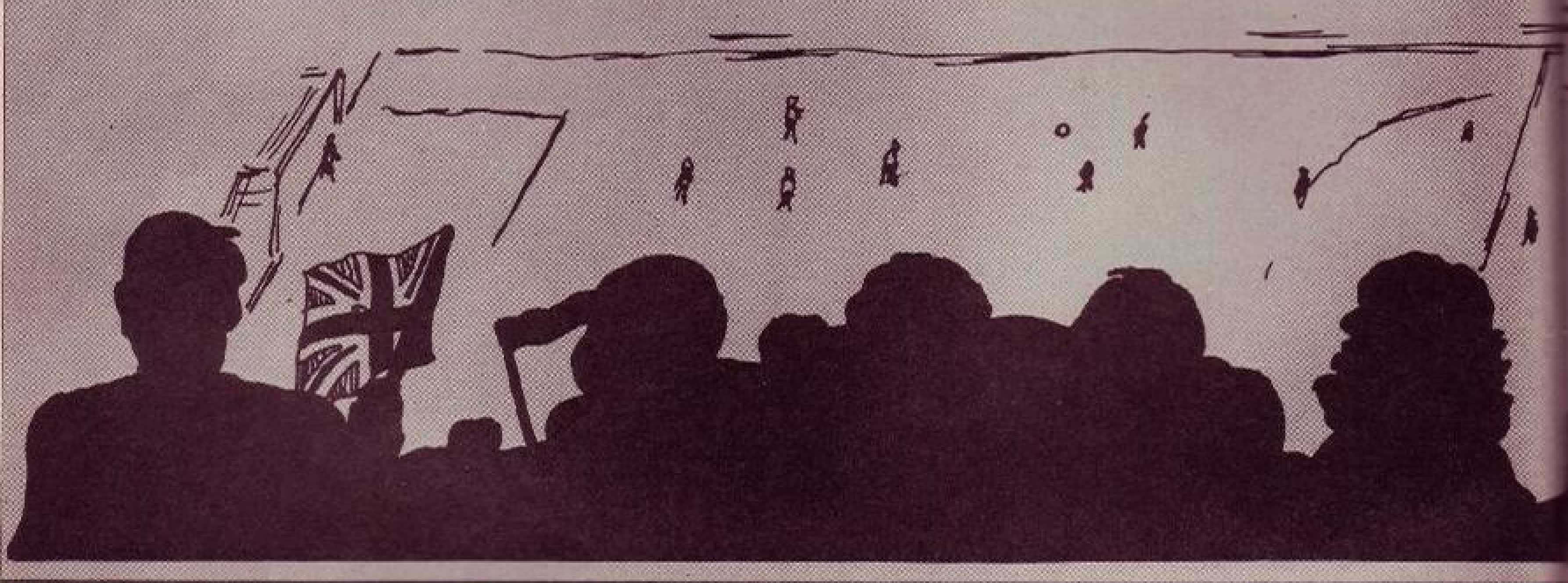
Injuries and short term form changes can also be introduced and will cause problems from match to match since you never know when a player may get injured or have an off day. All that lot can make choosing teams extremely complicated so start simple or you might lose 5-0 to Finland.

SECOND OPINION

Bobby Robson could do worse than have a crack at this in his preparation for the World Cup Finals. It's complex and demanding – not just mentally but physically as well, given the time needed to play a whole game. The only major drawback is those uninteresting graphics. I think the game might have been classier without them.

PC

You're given an initial squad of 16 players, all established internationals, and can add up to 20 more of your choice. The initial 16 will all have their particular skills and for the ones you add, their second and third dimensions can be defined. From your squad 11 players and five substitutes are picked for each game and this is where you



BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS

Solar Software, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

Left, right, fire. It was music to my tone-deaf ears. 'Where,' I had been musing only a few days before, 'have all the shoot-'em-ups gone.' Well, here is proof positive that the breed is not completely extinct, that there is still hope for those unregenerate blasters who will not, or cannot, cope with those new-fangled notions of mapping and thinking.

Battle Beyond The Stars, I'd be the first to admit, is not what you could describe as an *original* game. It will remind anyone who's been in an arcade in the past few years of a classic called *Galaxians*. You control a ship firing up the screen at a variety of aliens swooping down and unloading several mega-tons of lethal bombs. You clear one wave and go on to the next. You clear that and advance to take on yet more extra-terrestrials. And so on, for as many waves as the game contains.

Of course, a game as nostalgic as *Battle Beyond The Stars* has to have a suitably involved and silly scenario to give you some reason, however spurious, for risking your life. So here goes: on board the SSF1 Cutlass Captain King is preparing to warp from Alpha Centauri to planet Earth when what should he spot but 'a whole fleet of strange looking alien ships, heavily armed with an assortment of lasers and nuclear weapons.' Well, just fancy that. Naturally, battle ensues.

The game has five levels, each with five waves of aliens. You begin by being killed, since the game is so fast that it takes a few goes to realise what on Alpha Centauri is happening. This first wave is the Terrahawks, flapping birds winging all over the screen. They drop bombs at an alarming rate and are very hard to hit. However, here's a little tip for free: don't move at all, but just blast away from the centre. You'll bag the lot and graduate to the second wave...

The Spinners. These are fiendishly whirling Maltese crosses. There's not much of them, so they're extremely difficult to hit.

SECOND OPINION

The one word that sums this game up is FAST. It may not have much originality or require any great powers of intelligence to play but it's a very challenging shoot-em-up. The odd game of mindless zapping makes a nice change and I'm sure it will sell quite well to those of us who aren't ashamed to like a good blast as well as complicated game.

BW

Should you destroy them, you encounter the Death Stars – colourful, but deadly, asterisks. Next on the gruesome menu are the Bouncers, yellow barrels with unpredictable behaviour. After them are the Saucers, whose name is self-explanatory, and then the Space Mines. These things hang around in space and emit a shower of deadly particles when hit. These fragments are *very* hard to

have to pick wisely and learn from previous matches to mould a match winning team.

The game itself is represented by a bunch of stickmen moving left anr right in set formations on a pitch. Possession and play switch from end to end and some indication of the flow of play can be gleaned and even some excitement from the to and fro of the game. The graphics are extremely crude but serve their purpose to indicate the games events. During play you can make substitutions or move players around the field in an attempt to improve the side's performance but this will take experience to use effectively.

Each player is rated at the end of the game and the table updated for qualifying games. Then the process repeats itself for each match until you've qualified for the finals or been ignominiously knocked out. Success will mean you have to save the game and load up the finals tape where you battle in similar style with 23 other teams in league and knockout competition. A squad of only 20 players is allowed but any of the nine not playing may be used as subs.

The flexible strategy element of the game means it can be as tough or as easy as you like and with everything to control it really does give you some of the problems and, above all, uncertainties of an international manager's job. It's obviously limited graphically but with strategy games you have to expect that and it doesn't detract from the enjoyment of the game. At its most complicated and absorbing I found it a real challenge trying to win the cup although unlike league simulations you can't continue indefinitely. One nice touch is that the program is unprotected, NOT so that pirates can copy people's hard work but so that the enthusiast can dabble about in the program changing it as he wishes – good thinking.

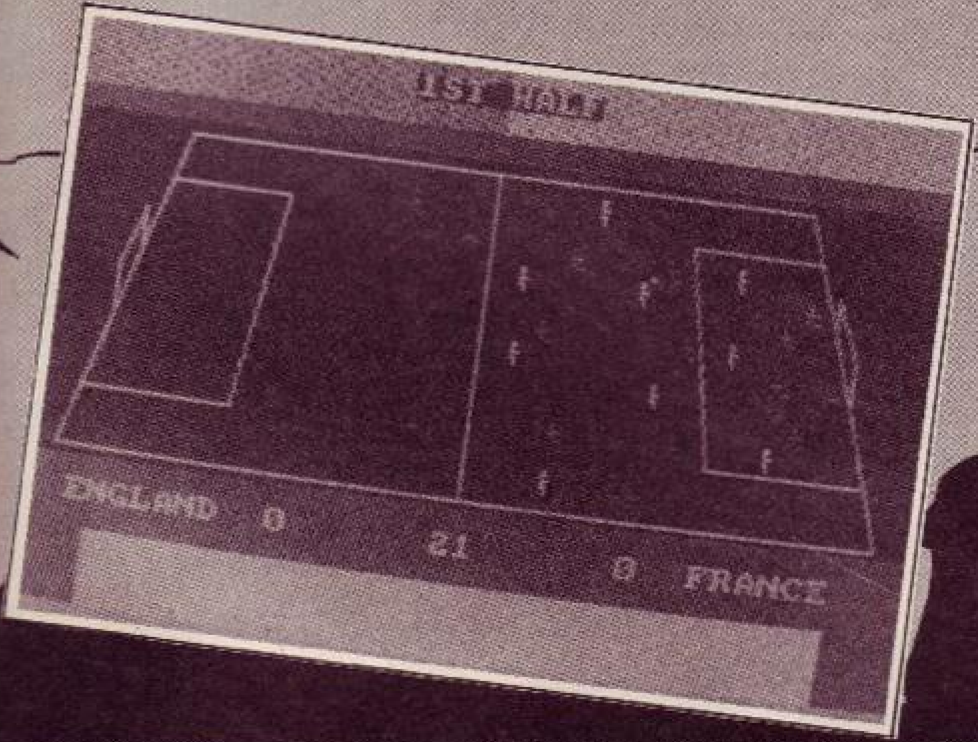
BW

G O O D   N E W S

- **A real challenge to the thinking football fan.**
- **Many definable features to tailor the game to your liking.**
- **Unprotected program encouraging you to alter it to your needs.**
- **Realistic simulation of the England manager's difficulties where picking players are concerned.**

B A D   N E W S

- **Graphics aren't essential but these stickmen do give the program a ragged feel.**
- **Certainly won't suit anyone who doesn't want to work for a win.**



England take on France in the first of their friendlies.

GRAPHICS	22%
SONICS	41%
GRAB FACTOR	62%
STAYING POWER	72%
A A RATING	68%

'There's an ad on p.57'

Mail order only

Mexico '86 is available by mail order only from Qual-soft for £9.95 from this address:
Qual-soft, Dept. CES, 18 Hazelmere Road, Stevenage, Herts SG2 8RX
Tel: 0438 721936

avoid.

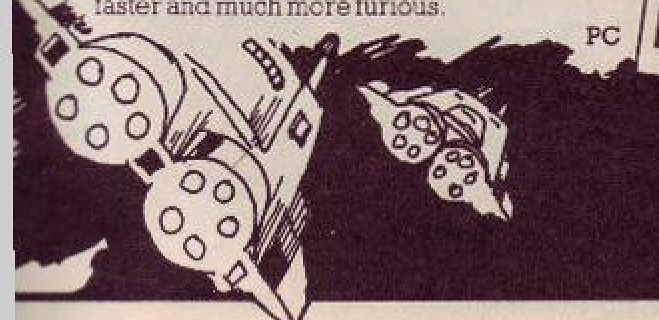
If you get through all that lot, you'll have to face them all again. But now there will be the Homers, seeking you out with a certain amount of intelligence. Don't ask me how you deal with *them*.

In between waves your ship scrolls up the screen over a pretty speckled background representing deepest space. Graphics throughout are colourful and sharply defined, while the sound, if not exactly sophisticated, is a suitably noisy assortment of blasts and explosions. Although it's not quite as pretty or as smooth as *Laserwarp*, Mikrogen's classy shoot-'em-up, the action is faster and much more furious.

PC



A fleet of saucers prepares to swoop in on your ship



G O O D   N E W S

- **Fast and furious action.**
- **Requires little or no mental effort.**
- **Ascending levels of difficulty.**

B A D   N E W S

- **Requires little or no mental effort.**
- **More mature players could find it too fast**
- **Utterly unoriginal.**

GRAPHICS	67%
SONICS	49%
GRAB FACTOR	69%
STAYING POWER	51%
A A RATING	62%

MACROCOSMICA

Amsoft/Datacom, £9.95 cass, £13.95 disk, keys with joystick or keys

There's only one way to describe this game – *Elite* without the vector graphics but with a lot more trading. It forsakes the 3D space laser action in favour of a more complicated trading game where success is in staying alive and making money is tougher than borrowing a fiver from the art department.

The game begins by giving you a choice of three skill levels: difficult, impossible and suicidal – get the idea? These aren't far from the truth but fear not, with a bit of experience and know-how it is possible to make profits. After creating the universe in which the game takes place (it's always different) you are put at the controls of the ship in which you'll cruise the galaxies.

Life begins at a space station but most of your business will be conducted at planets where cargos can be bought and sold. The initial screen is packed with information, the most important of which is the central command menu which gives you the list of possible actions. At space stations there are two functions that cannot be performed at planets – banking and telex. Banking is where you can change your money between cash and credit, (cash is liable to be stolen), while telexing will tell you the whereabouts of Mr Hoo. He's a forerunner of yours who went off his trolley and should be avoided at all costs.

Making a short scan will take you off the flight deck and reveal the three sectors of the galaxy around you. These can contain space stations, planets that look like marbles, space or uncharted territory, the latter being out of bounds for the ship. Once a destination is selected and the ship launched the display changes to show a box in which the stars whizz past. On an uninterrupted flight the destination planet will loom into view and the ship will land – all automatically.

The flight can be interrupted by two things: pirates and meteor storms. Both can be avoided by evasive action but if fuel is low the pirates will have to be fought or the meteors flown through. Fighting takes you to a simple shoot-em-up screen where successive hits are needed to destroy pirates but they also attack your shields and hull and if laser power or hull strength reach zero you're dead. Meteors also damage the shields and hull again causing death if they reach zero strength.

SECOND OPINION

The first thing you're likely to do in this engaging trading game is to lose – or 'loose' if you follow the program's spelling – all your money in those intergalactic casinos. The program seems to incorporate some none too subtle cheat modes. Once you've got over your gambling craze you'll find an involving task of getting from space-rags to riches. Graphics and sound may be pretty basic, but they're not really what the game's about. If you're dying to get hold of Elite you could do a lot worse than while away some of the time with this.

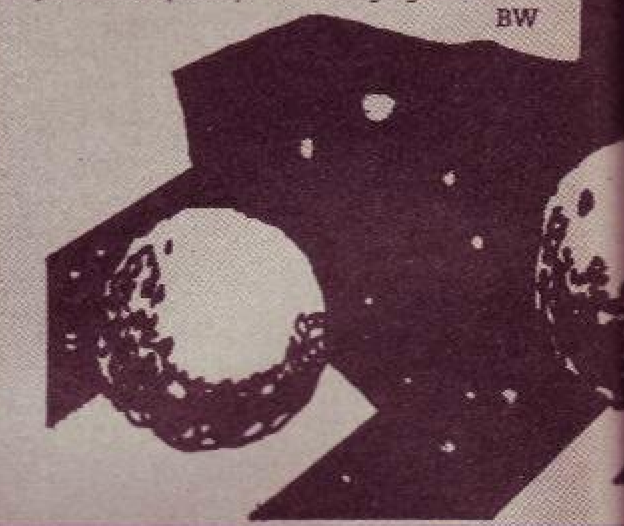
PC

The facilities offered by planets vary and to find out more about them you have to use the short scan. This will give some written details and a series of letter codes that changes each game. These will be continuous throughout a single game and tell you which planets have repair facilities, casinos, hyperdrive units and so on.

There are many different cargos ranging in price and availability but the obvious aim is to buy low at one planet and sell high at the other. Where the best prices are is discovered by experience and keeping an eye out for shortages, civil wars and supply availability.

Money can be spent in many ways – on refuelling the ship, repairing it, protection money to pirates, buying extra equipment or in a casino. This means there has to be a regular source of income or you'll soon be bankrupt or dead. Once the game has ended you're given a rating but don't expect this to improve too quickly – it's a tough game.

BW





TALES OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Interceptor, £6.99, joystick or keys

The romantic hero is not yet dead – like Valentino on his white stallion you have to go to the rescue of a fair damsel in distress. The only problem is she's your sister and there's a high probability you'll get killed trying. The game combines platform screens with scrolling sections where you have to avoid things.

There are eight stages in the game as you play Imrahil trying to get to the battlements of the Sultan's palace where Anitra, your sister, is being held captive. The first stage is set aboard Sinbad's ship in the Red Sea and Imrahil has to collect seven golden jugs in the correct order.

The jugs are placed all over the ship and each one has a letter on it. The letters spell out the word ARABIAN and have to be collected in that order. This is far from easy since there are dangers on the screen to try to stop you. A cannon, octopus and plucked turkey (or what looks like one) all lose you a life when touched and send you back to the start of the screen. The other major hazard is falling while leaping around the rigging of the ship because long drops also send you back to the start of the screen. There is only one successful way to get all the jugs and it may take a while to find.

If you complete this stage you move from the sea to a river. Here you control a raft's movement left or right on the screen as Imrahil sits on it, paddling against the current. From over the background of palms fly large rocks which have to be avoided or they will sink the raft – this is easily done. More of a problem is caused by crocodiles that surface along the river and have to be paddled over while they are submerged or shot with lightning bolts.

Having done that it's back to the hard platform action as Imrahil tries to pick up another seven jugs in a cave. Once again they have to spell out the word 'Arabian' and this time there are a group of genies who move about screen trying to stop you. Like the dangers on screen one the genies follow regular movement patterns which have to be worked out so that they can be avoided. One genie does home in on you though and like the bird on the first screen can cause many problems.

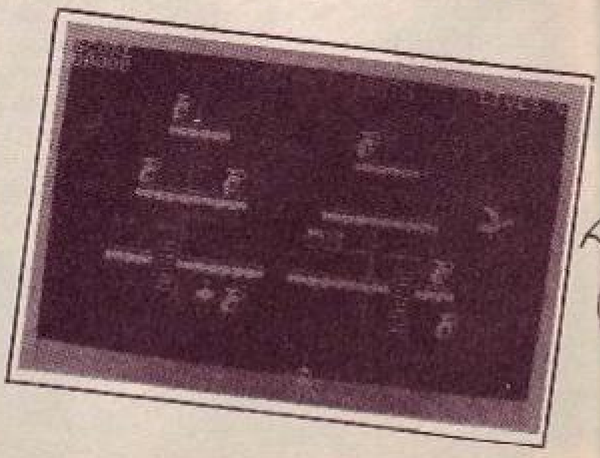
A flying carpet sequence over a desert is the fourth stage and after it follow more platform screens where you collect jugs. All the stages are quite tough and need constant attention and good timing to complete. It proves very frustrating at first but once you know the pattern for a screen you should be able to repeat it.

BW

SECOND OPINION

I rather liked this. The first screen in particular has just the right balance of difficulty and disaster. It looks easy, but isn't. Unfortunately, other screens aren't quite so interesting or so demanding and the game suffers accordingly.

PC





The short scan reveals the surrounding sector's planets.

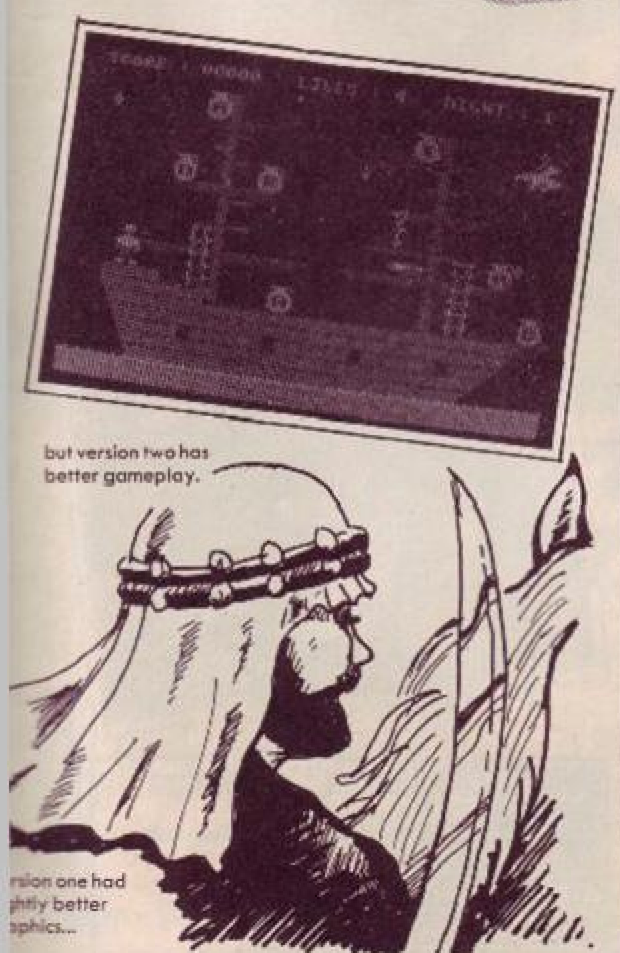
GOOD NEWS

- A very tough game.
- Plenty of strategy required.
- Lots of nice features like the casino, black holes and pirate fights.
- The trading is absorbing and demanding.

BAD NEWS

- The shoot-out is graphically unimpressive.
- It's very easy to get beaten and therefore discouraged early on.

GRAPHICS	39%
SONICS	26%
GRAB FACTOR	74%
STAYING POWER	82%
A A RATING	78%



but version two has better gameplay.

...rsion one had ...htly better ...phics...



Version 1 vs. Version 2

The version of the program which we've reviewed is in fact the second one for the Amstrad that has appeared. The first one showed up at the PCW show and according to Interceptor 2-3,000 copies were probably sold before they decided to stop distributing it.

The decision was made because the company weren't 100% happy with the game and wanted to wait for this second version which was being programmed by a different person. Version one had less features on it and was a lot easier but was graphically more impressive except for some dodgy scrolling for the river and desert stages.

The games will now be sold back to back on the same tape so that you can sample them both. Those of you feeling aggrieved at having bought the first version fear not – for a fee of 50 pence to cover postage and packing Interceptor will replace the first version with the tape containing both games.

For the record, version one would get slightly lower ratings than version two.

GOOD NEWS

- Tough platform screens.
- Scrolling stages break up the action.
- Calls for good timing and reactions.

BAD NEWS

- Can become frustrating if you can't crack a screen.
- Very accurate positioning is needed for climbing ladders.

GRAPHICS	61%
SONICS	63%
GRAB FACTOR	72%
STAYING POWER	65%
A A RATING	68%

ZORRO

US Gold/Datasoft, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Zorro is hardly the likeliest character to be the star of a computer game but he does bring a touch of chivalry to the action as he battles to save a senorita kidnapped by the evil Sergeant Garcia. His task involves both arcade action and a good deal of puzzling in trying to get past the guards and obstacles in his path.

The action begins with the senorita on a balcony above Zorro waving a hanky at him. Suddenly she disappears and the hanky drifts down and gets caught up on a well. The black-caped and masked figure has to retrieve the hanky and go off in search of the girl and a way to rescue her.

SECOND OPINION

This would have been a terrific and exciting game if only there had been some thrilling silent-movie accompaniment. As it was, the dirge detracted greatly from the fun. I suppose you could always get someone in to play the piano.

A shame really, because despite the unimpressive graphics Zorro has a lot to offer. The puzzles are not only difficult, but amusing as well.

PC

The screens are composed mostly of the insides and outsides of Spanish villas arranged to make the most of their platform game potential. Zorro moves around this quaint environment by running, jumping and climbing in true Douglas Fairbanks style. The problem in each screen is to find what can be climbed or jumped on to make further progress and where the objects are that are needed to complete Zorro's task.

Zorro will encounter many obstacles, mostly in the form of doors and walls but with the occasional stretch of water and sliding barrier. These either have to be got round, over or through. An alternative route may avoid the problem or an object may be required to make something happen. One thing to watch out for are trampolines which will appear in the most unlikely places.

These are particularly handy because bouncing on them gradually builds up height so that Zorro can make herculean leaps up the screen to seemingly inaccessible places. The best piece of advice is to try bouncing on anything that might give a bit of lift and see where it gets you.

There are two basic things that can prove fatal to Zorro – the guards and water. If the caped hero drops in some water he loses a life. After all, who can fight with a rusty sword? Guards pop out of doorways and if Zorro runs into them he has to fight or die. There are two ways of dealing with them: one is to press the fire button when the swords are engaged at the right point and the other is to force them back off a ledge or into a wall.

The puzzles are the main interest of the game and several tests of logic and skill are involved. Without this the game would be very ordinary but having these mental challenges provides plenty of stimulation to keep you going. The complicated layout of the game is another plus with many screens having exits in the ceiling, floor, on the ground and half way up screens, all potentially leading to different screens.

The animation isn't that hot but the game screens are well designed and colours are nicely used to give the terracotta effect of the real thing. The music is pretty dire as it plods along through the game but at least you can turn it off. Initially you may well be disappointed with the game but as you explore further it starts to hook you with the tasks.

BW



The masked hero leaps his way through the heavily guarded town.

G O O D N E W S

- **Good screen designs and atmosphere.**
- **Nice features like trampolines, ladders and lifting platforms.**
- **Lots of testing puzzles.**
- **Good fighting sequences thrown in.**

B A D N E W S

- **Animation and movement aren't very good.**

GRAPHICS	68%
SONICS	41%
GRAB FACTOR	78%
STAYING POWER	77%
A A RATING	76%

3D QUASARS

Solar Software, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys

From the moment you set eyes on the cassette inlay you'll know exactly what this game is all about – flying down a trench shooting things. The things are two types of alien spacecraft, while the trench is a breach in your defence system that you have to defend until it is sealed.

SECOND OPINION

I was pretty disappointed with this, especially after liking Solar Software's other offering this month – the exciting shoot-'em-up Battle Beyond The Stars. 3D Quasars *has none of that game's variety, and precious little of its fun. The good ol' 3D trench itself is quite well executed, with its throbbing lines giving a good impression of movement. But that's about all that can be said in this game's favour. The action is repetitive and soon became very boring – and I'm a shoot-'em-up fan. If you're still waiting to be converted to the joys of mass destruction, try a different game.*

PC

The trench appears with your ship at the bottom of the screen, and scrolls towards you. In the distance will come alien ships that loom down the tunnel at you. The ship can only move left or right in the trench and fire single shots along it. The alien craft don't shoot back but will do their best to ram into you.

The aliens come in progressively harder waves and your three lives are under constant threat. They always come in the same pattern though and the same number of ships will complete a wave. Learning the patterns will help you progress through the game although later waves need some luck as well. An extra life is awarded at 5,000 points but that's a score that will take some getting.

BW

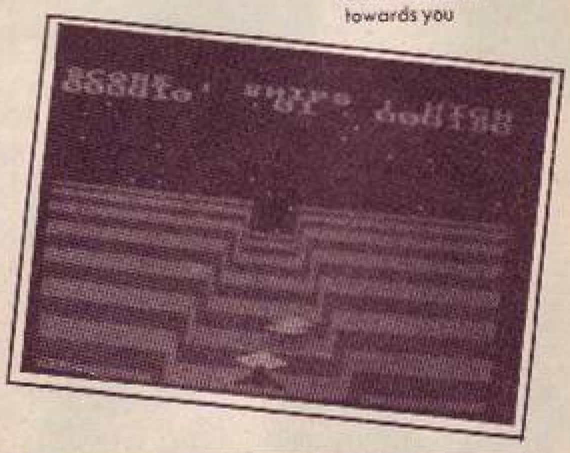
G O O D N E W S

- **Tough action.**
- **Fast and quite colourful.**

B A D N E W S

- **Little variation in waves.**
- **Simple patterns and gameplay.**
- **Very unoriginal.**
- **Simple sound effects.**

More aliens whizz down the trench towards you



GRAPHICS	51%
SONICS	31%
GRAB FACTOR	43%
STAYING POWER	28%
A A RATING	38%



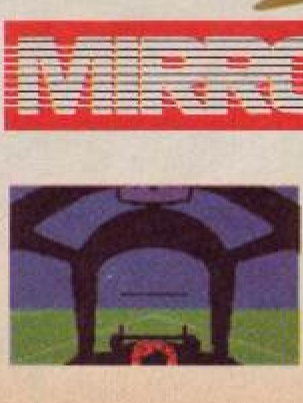
THE BEST THING SINCE THE REAL THING

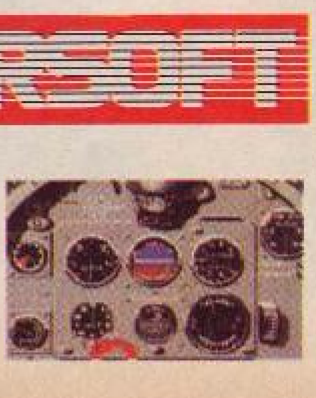
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MIRRORSOFT

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DOORS OF DOOM

Amsoft/Gem, £9.95 cass, £13.95 disk, joystick or keys

To recycle an old phrase, this game is a real gem in more ways than one. Not only does it have good gameplay, great graphics and animation but also a scenery design facility where you can create the whole of the 25 screen scrolling playing area.

The task you've been set is to represent the human race and decide its future by trying to collect the doors of Doom on the planet Doom. The scenario is written in delightfully humourous style and is certainly an improvement on the usually minimal Amsoft instructions.

The game starts with a delightful set of scenery composed of many different areas of desert, ruins, fortresses, houses, water, palm trees and temples. These are all dotted with many objects, some useful but most highly dangerous. The character you play is a well animated fellow who can stroll about the playing area on foot and jump up onto or over obstacles.

All the solid scenery can be walked on or through, as long as your man has solid ground to stand on. Moving into thin air will cause the man to fall but this isn't too dangerous since he can drop any distance without harm. What are dangerous are the robots that patrol the game and the static scenery that saps your energy.

The robots are evil-looking purple things that can fly around anywhere on the screen and every time they touch you sap your energy level. Fortunately, though, you carry a laser and repeated hits on a robot will kill it, the number of hits needed depending on which of the three skill levels you're on. There are two basic types of robot that aren't distinguished visibly but by their actions. One will home in on you wherever you are while the majority hover around the doors making getting to them a hazardous prospect.

Other things that drain energy are mixed in with the rest of the scenery and take the form of flaming torches, pools of water, metal weapons and other devices. Walking around also uses up energy and if this reaches zero the game is over. Energy can be replaced by picking up the steaming cups of tea that crop up quite frequently but energy conservation is the hardest part of the game and will really test your powers.

There are some objects that will give you a helping hand though and these appear as little purple canisters. They have five main uses: levitating, floating, shield, paralysing

SECOND OPINION

The graphics in this game are absolutely stunning – they really could be on an arcade machine. The introductory music is also of a very high quality and shoves you into the game with an uplifted heart.

Gameplay itself, though, is not particularly original, but this is more than compensated by the overall quality. The option of redesigning screens is a great boon, which means that Doors of Doom will run and run.

PC

Scenery design

The scenery loads in a separate block to the rest of the program and using the scenery design program you can create your own backgrounds on which the action takes place. Initially the original scenery can be altered. This is a good place to start and with 25 screensful to play with an endless variety of scenery is possible.

The screens have to be compiled from 175 characters that comprise a massive assortment of building blocks and the features in the game. Some can't be used like the doors, teacups and canisters which are randomly placed for the game. You also need enough blank locations to put all the features of the game into but when saving a scene it will tell you whether it's legal or not.

If you want to go even further and redesign the whole character set you'll need to buy another forthcoming Amsoft/Gem release called *Shape and Sound*. This won't be necessary for a while since playing about with the original character set is enough to create radically different designs – but watch this space for a full review of the other program in the next issue.

STRANGELOOP

Virgin, £8.95, joystick only

Strange name for a strange but immensely enjoyable game. It's set aboard a factory ship out in space and has the sort of graphic excellence we expect from Virgin, as well as some really wicked puzzling that could keep you playing for weeks. Not only that but it's got 250 rooms full of dangers, objects, humour and colour.

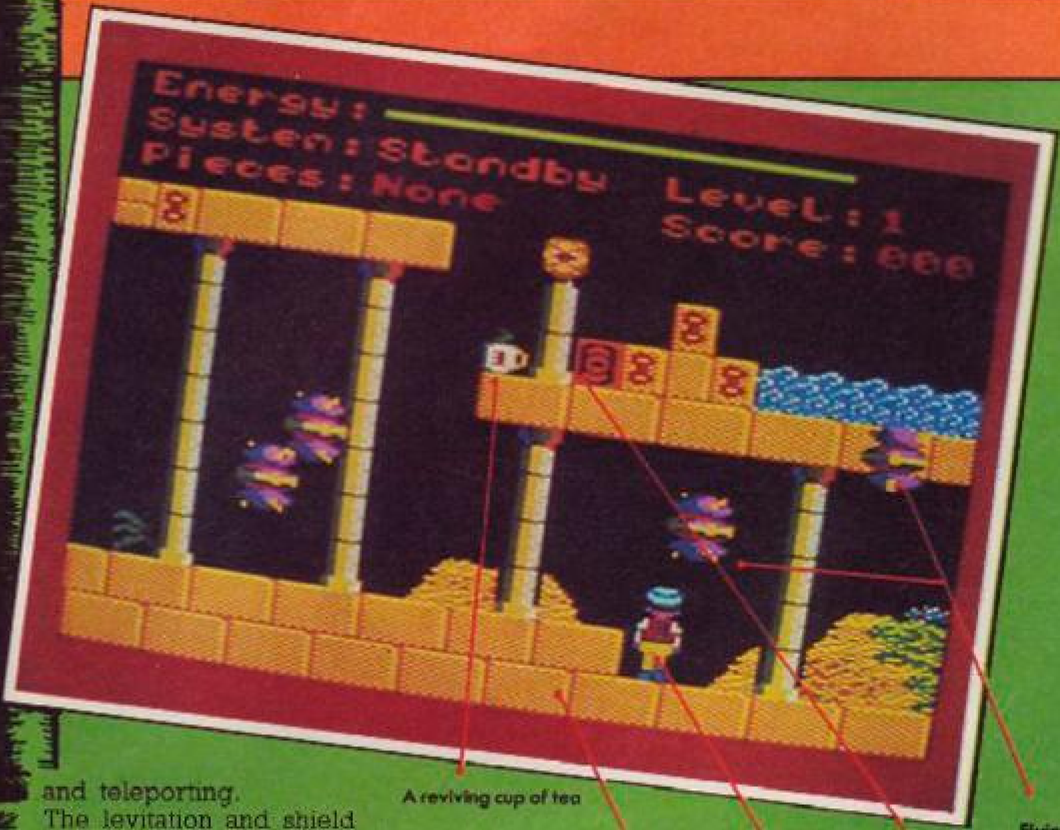
The factory itself has been running out of control for many years and the robot population have taken over, making the whole place a deathtrap for humans. Your task is to get to the control centre of the ship and shut it down. This is no simple matter of just finding the room though – a whole series of puzzles have to be solved and obstacles overcome before the way becomes clear.

You start somewhere near the centre of the factory which is made up of a block of rooms 25 high and 10 wide. The space-suited hero begins on foot but not far away is a jet cycle which will provide a much faster and convenient form of transport. Most of the rooms are much like the starting place, filled with hi-tech machinery. Moving bucket belts, conveyor belts, floors and machines may partition off rooms while connections between them areas take the form of tubes and holes through which the man can pass. This passage results in a momentarily blank screen which may prove annoying.

Most locations are filled with 'swarf' which are little pieces of junk that will rip holes in the spacesuit. These decrease the oxygen supply and unless patched eventually lose you one of your eight lives. The swarf can be shot with the gun you carry but reappears if you re-enter a room. Mega-swarf is a much tougher proposition and appears as large bouncing balls that are indestructible and fatal on contact. All this can make rooms appear colourful and active, if not a little messy.

There are other dangers that may result in a messy ending for our hero: he may get squished by crushers – which have a great sound effect as they pound up and down; de-





A reviving cup of tea

Flying robots

You the hero

One of the doors

Just look at that amazing scenery

and teleporting.
The levitation and shield work on you allowing you to fly and be protected against robots. Teleport also works directly on you, moving you rapidly to another part of the game and getting you out of trouble when used properly. Floating and paralysing work on the robots to keep them out of your way. The problem is that the powers last for only a short period and after being used have to be re-collected from another location.

The graphics and gameplay make this a great game to look at and play and the title screen has some marvellous music to soothe your ears. The real bonuses are the prospect of an enhanced disk version of the game and the screen design facility.

BW

G O O D N E W S

- **25 scrolling screens of amazing graphics.**
- **Tough game task.**
- **Novel touches using the five canisters.**
- **Great game design facility.**
- **A very difficult and intelligent robotic opponent.**

B A D N E W S

- **To redesign character set you need another program.**
- **Not much mental challenge in the game.**

GRAPHICS	97%
SONICS	71%
GRAB FACTOR	89%
STAYING POWER	92%
A A RATING	91%

energised by one of the many robots or even sucked out of a depressurized part of the ship. The basic rule is always: if it moves, avoid it.

The non-moving objects are what your man is after and these take two forms. One group provides general supplies while the other is made up of the objects used in problem solving. The supplies replenish oxygen, fuel, charges (for the gun) and patches for the suit. These work instantaneously when they are picked up by passing through them. The other objects are picked up in the same way and appear in a box on the screen which – your 'pocket'.

When used in the right circumstances these objects will be exchanged for another object, cause a door to open or some other similar effect. What and where they are used is for you to work out but it does help to be logical. Some of the locations and object uses are quite odd – evidence of the "Gang of Five's" (Virgin's programmers) humour.

The graphics create a good atmosphere and what sound effects there are add to the action. There's a handy save game feature since this game will take a long while to solve. One other nice touch is that when you die, instead of appearing straightaway where you died you can position the man anywhere legal within the room. While you're doing this the game is paused and no harm can come to you.

Following on from their classic *Sorcery* this is another tremendous game giving excellent graphic action and mindbending puzzles in just the right mix.

BW

SECOND OPINION

This is a massive game and a worthy follow-up to Sorcery. Movement is pretty smooth, but your path to solving the game will be strewn with disaster. It's far from easy – the adventure element is particularly strong and will require powerful brainwork. With such a huge number of locations the game is bound to give long-term satisfaction.

PC

G O O D N E W S

- **250 screens.**
- **Great graphics and hazards in all 250 rooms.**
- **Tough puzzles to solve.**
- **Good mix of arcade and adventure action.**
- **Guaranteed to keep you guessing for a long while.**

B A D N E W S

- **Usual overlapping graphics problem.**
- **Pause in flipping between screens.**

GRAPHICS	90%
SONICS	44%
GRAB FACTOR	88%
STAYING POWER	94%
A A RATING	91%

Living up to *Sorcery*

After the massive success of *Sorcery* it was always going to be difficult for Virgin to produce a worthy follow-up. *Sorcery +* hardly counted since it merely expanded on an established theme but *Strangeloop* is a real departure.

It combines the excellent graphic quality of *Sorcery* with a much tougher mental task that should give it even more lasting challenge. It may not have as much immediate appeal as *Sorcery* since getting into the puzzles will take a while.

Strangeloop is also of course a lot bigger than *Sorcery* and much more hi-tech in its looks, features and gameplay. With such improvements there's no doubt about the success *Strangeloop* should achieve and it makes the arrival of *Shogun* an even more eagerly awaited prospect.



HYPERSPORTS

Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick only

Just when you thought your waggling arm was about to waste away it's arrived - and is guaranteed to give the old muscles overtime. Six events of skill, timing and good old fashioned stick bashing will really put you through your paces and probably eclipse Daley Thompson, Brian Jacks and Geoff Capes in the process.

The six events are swimming, skeet shooting, gymnastics, archery, triple jump and weightlifting. There are three events on each side of the tape and although this isn't many for a game they all demand excellence in one form or another. The game starts with you inputting your initials so that high scores for each event can be displayed as your own world records. Then it's straight into the nitty gritty.

Swimming first, and a test of rhythm and reactions over two lengths of a 50 metre pool. Three other competitors line up on the left of the screen with you and as the gun goes they all hit the water heading for the right of the screen. Each lane scrolls separately with your man in lane three. He is propelled along by waggling, but in order to last the whole race at good speed this has to be done at a relaxed pace. Exactly the right waggling speed is found by experience and this is only interrupted by the occasional sudden stab for the fire button as the swimmer gasps for air. Waggle too vigorously and the swimmer may slow to a snail's pace. Mistime your breaths and he'll be left spluttering in the water. There is a qualifying time for the event and every time you defeat it it gets a bit lower.

Skeet shooting is a matter of timing and fast reactions in order to shoot all of the clay pigeons that zip across screen. A man with a gun stands at the bottom of the screen while clay pigeons fly in ones and twos from the left. Two small black rectangles home in on the clays, one slightly to your left the other to the right. When one of these is over a clay the gun has to be moved in the correct direction and fired to destroy it. There are three lots of pigeons so that you've got three cracks at getting a qualifying score. All this happens very fast and calls for great reflexes and a good shooting rhythm. As with all the events there is a qualifying score which gets gradually harder as you get better.

The gymnastics is a leap over a vaulting horse and combines timing with a waggle. The gymnast runs up to the horse automatically and you have to time his leap off the

SECOND OPINION

Yes, it may be 'too demanding for some bodies' – mine was one. I was physically and emotionally drained at the end of this contest and I fear I may have permanently damaged my joystick hand. Not to mention the joystick. But there's more to this than gratuitous waggling – you need to use your brain as much as your brawn. The gymnastics in particular require a lot of skill if your not end up banging your head on the floor in frustration.

PC



The swimmers on their blocks and ready to go







This is the fourth notable waggling game on the Amstrad – the others being *Daley Thompson's Decathlon, Brian Jacks Superstar Challenge* and *Geoff Capes Strongman* (reviewed in this issue). So how do they match up to this latest sweat-bringer?

DT's and *BJ's* have more events but both lose out on some other points. *DT's* events tend to be very similar with straightforward waggling for running and a fire button for setting angles in the throwing events. *Hypersports* has much more variety in both the events and the skills required to complete them.

BJ's also has the variety of events and skills but unfortunately loses out on the gameplay side in events like the arm dips, squat thrusts and football. *Hypersports* also has slicker graphics and gameplay with a sense of humour thrown in when the gymnast bounces on his head, the swimmer gasps for air and the skeet shooter winks at you.

GC also loses out because the events have less skill applied to them and tend not to produce the same urgency and excitement. For my money *Hypersports* is the best yet and will really put the player and their joystick through their paces.

springboard into the air. Then you have to hammer for dear life to rotate the man in the air before trying to land on your feet on the other side. The timing and waggling are probably the hardest of the six events to get the hang of and this one may become a source of frustration. Once again you get three goes at it but you'll probably need many more.

A change of pace on side two with two more peaceful events before you go into the real muscle-sapper. Archery is similar to the same event on *BJ's Superstar Challenge* with a target moving down the screen and you deciding the wind speed, elevation and release to try to hit it. Three sets of arrows are available to get the familiar increasing qualifying score.

The triple jump also keeps you away from waggling as the man approaches the sandpit under his own steam and you are left to set the angles for the three stages of the jump. These have to be as near to 45 degrees as possible to get the maximum possible distance.

The last event is weightlifting and will probably make even your fingernails sweat as you try to lift progressively heavier weights. The divisions go from flyweight to super heavy with the difference being how long and hard you have to waggle to get the weight in the air. This is done against a time limit and you have to satisfy three judges before you succeed with the lift. Three goes again and you'll be ready for a rest at the end of them.

Grapically the most impressive of the events is the swimming with the skeet shooting looking good as well. The sound effects throughout are very arcade-ish although there are no long tunes, just little bursts of jingles. The gameplay is excellent on all six events providing several different types of challenge that should keep you at it for weeks.

BW

GOOD NEWS

- **Six gruelling events.**
- **Attractive graphics and animation.**
- **Many different skills required as well as good waggling.**
- **Increasing difficulty in the qualifying scores.**
- **You won't be able just to keep going around as in *DT's Decathlon*.**
- **Worth the wait.**

BAD NEWS

- **Events have to be played in two lots of three.**
- **May be too demanding for some bodies.**

GRAPHICS	88%
SONICS	60%
GRAB FACTOR	88%
STAYING POWER	89%
A A RATING	88%

GLEN HODDLE SOCCER

Amsoft/Shirekilo, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

"Robson picks up possession deep in his own half. He passes out to Barnes on the left, passed one player, passed two, down to the byeline and floats in a tantalising cross. Hoddle volleys the ball from the edge of the area and as the net ripples with the impact of the ball the crowd goes wild, Wade sinks back in his chair realising he isn't going to come back from 20-0 down".

You won't actually see any volleying or net rippling in this game but if you play the computer there will be plenty of defeats by more than 20 goals early on. Even once you've got some practice it will be difficult to hold it to single figures. These footballing annihilations take place on a horizontal pitch that scrolls left and right in sections and is packed with 22 thin but blocky players.

If you don't want to get massacred you can play against another budding Pele or watch the computer battling it out with itself.

SECOND OPINION

This is a game that give 100% effort but is distinctly short on skill. It's nowhere near as good as Matchday. The control is appalling, and the graphics are equally bad. The sound features what seems to be a noise of waves slowly breaking on a pebbly beach. In short, not a shred of Glenn's silky skills are on view here.

PC

The games can be of three different lengths: eight minutes, 16 minutes or unlimited. These are split into two halves, except of course for the unlimited game which just keeps going till you want to stop. Within 8 or 16 minutes though an awful lot of goals can be scored. The computer has three skill levels but all three are immensely difficult to beat.

The kick-offs are more like a basketball jump ball as the two players race each other to the ball. Even after goals the scorer may get to the ball first – somebody hasn't been reading their rule book lately. Once in possession you control the player with the ball and can run with it, try to pass it or shoot. If you aren't in possession you can either just use the fire button to get the nearest player to chase the ball or chase after it with a player under joystick control. The player under your control has a different colour pair of shorts but these are often difficult to notice in the heat of action.

The ball can travel in the air or along the ground and if a player runs into a loose ball he picks up possession, or blocks it if it's in the air. To score you just kick or dribble the ball into the net past a goalie who doesn't dive (saves on the laundry bills) but just tries to block like any other player.

If the ball goes out of play anywhere else a corner, goal kick or throw-in are awarded but these are taken automatically and you have no control over the balls direction or strength. This usually results in you gaining little advantage from them and often gives the ball away in an inconvenient position.

The computer plays an incredibly fast game and has rather too many built in advantages for a competitive game to be achieved without long hours of practice. Even while playing with two players it is difficult to string together moves with so many players wandering aimlessly about all over screen. The lack of control over them, set pieces and most of all the kickoffs often leave you frustrated and although it may prove a long term challenge many people will be extremely disappointed by the more immediate unplayability of it.

BW



The rather crude player graphics tend to nip round at high speed

GOOD NEWS

- **A very tough computer opponent.**
- **One or two player option.**

BAD NEWS

- **Small, indistinct graphics.**
- **No control over kickoffs, corners, throw-ins or goal kicks.**
- **The action is too fast for good moves to be built up.**
- **Identity of player you control is hard to spot.**

GRAPHICS	44%
SONICS	33%
GRAB FACTOR	42%
STAYING POWER	60%
A A RATING	50%

COMPUTER HITS

Beau Jolly, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disc

CASSETTE VERSION

This is certainly the age of the compilation and although these ten games most definitely have not sold a million they combine to make a great value-for-money package, effectively costing half the price of a Mastertronic game each. There are five games on each side of the tape and a wide enough variety to satisfy most tastes.

CHUCKIE EGG

A classic platform game with 256 levels of increasing difficulty. The aim is to guide a tubby hero aroung the platforms on each screen, collecting the 12 eggs. Ladders and lifts connect the platforms which are patrolled by ducklings and on later stages a flying duck will escape from a cage to harass you. There are also corn piles left around that both you and the ducklings can get. Your man is safe enough dropping off platforms unless he falls off the bottom of the screen – where he dies.

KILLER GORILLA

A version of the classic arcade game *Donkey Kong* in which you have to rescue a girl from the dastardly clutches of a gorilla. There are four screens on which you have to reach the top via the platforms, ladders and lifts on them. The gorilla sends many obstacles to thwart you which have to be destroyed or avoided. On the fourth screen you get your chance to bring the gorilla crashing to earth and be reunited with the girl.

DEFEND OR DIE

A good version of the arcade game *Defender* where you have to protect a planet and its scientists from an alien invasion. The scientists wander the planet surface while you protect the skies above that are filled with landers, bombers, swarmers and baiters trying to destroy you and the scientists. The screen scrolls left and right on the wraparound planet surface although the only drawback is that this is sluggish and the inertia is tough to handle.

HEROES OF KAHN

This is the only adventure game in the package but, according to the Pilgrim, it's well worth having. It features lots of graphic locations to add to the atmosphere as you battle to release four heroes from their imprisonment. The action all takes place in the mythical land of Kahn as you battle to release the land from the Darkness by finding the four heroes. The usual text entry with a save game option and a score to see how well you're doing.

PINBALL WIZARD

This pinball table doesn't have the table design feature of *Macadam Bumper* but does retain some of the addictive qualities of pinball. The ball movement is fairly good although it does tend to speed up and slow down without warning. The table design is quite a difficult one demanding attention from the player and with features like rollover targets and bonuses. The background colour and the graphics as the flippers hit the ball leave something to be desired but it's still a playable pinball.

FLIGHT PATH737

A flight simulator that sets the task of taking off in a 737, flying over a mountain range and then landing on the other side. The display is a cockpit view of the horizon with the instrumentation below. The parameters of the flight can be varied to change the height of the mountains, length of runway, crosswinds and engine fires. Only one attempt at a landing is possible due to fuel constraints and this combined with the slow screen update can make the game frustrating.

SECOND OPINION

Whether you get the cassette or disc version you won't have any grounds to be disappointed with this compilation on the grounds of value for money. While one or two of the games aren't exactly staggeringly good, others really are top class. The variety means that there is something for everyone, from the adventurer to the blaster.

The only problem with such products is the dilemma they pose for people who have a few of them already. But for anyone new to computer games Computer Hits will be a terrific introduction.

PC

The Covenant was an AA rave and with graphics like this are you surprised?



SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Graphically this war game leaves a lot to be desired but it has quite a novel objective and combination of tasks. It gives you the task of achieving one of seven objectives in respect to an enemy complex. On the simplest level you have to photograph the complex and on the hardest to penetrate it and steal some secret plans. The team you control posess different skills so that a combination of wargaming and adventure tactics are required.

GHOULS

A four screen platform game but which moves at an extremely fast pace and has some devilish adversaries. The aim on each screen is to get to the top right hand corner by jumping about the platforms. You can collect dots and power jewels on the way for points but a time limit ticks inexorably down. The dangers include a ghost that homes in on you, spiky mats, moving platforms and walkways. A very tough, fast game with good sound effects but can be very frustrating as you can die so quickly.

THE COVENANT

This excellent arcade adventure got a rave review in the November issue and features some delightful graphics and demanding gameplay. The covenant is made up of 64 pieces of parchment which as the last survivor of your race you have to retrieve it. To do this you also have to capture all the animals living in the underground caverns to repopulate the planet surface. The animals come in four room sections and have to be anaesthetized and this involves a puzzling element as you make your way around either on foot or in the flying globe. Lots to do and see in this large game.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Jack has to climb several screens as he tries to get the money, golden goose and kill the giant. On each screen he will need an object to help him get through it as various insects and birds try to bring him to grief. The final screen has a time limit in which you must get an axe and fell the giant. Each screen demands timing, speed and accuracy in trying to traverse the hazards which can prove very difficult to overcome. Not many screens though and they can prove frustrating.

BW

G O O D   N E W S

- ▶ **10 games for the price of one.**
- ▶ **Wide variety of game types.**
- ▶ **Excellent programs like The Covenant, Defend or Die and Heroes of Kahn.**
- ▶ **Full instructions for all games.**
- ▶ **An excellent Xmas gift to a new computer owner.**

B A D   N E W S

- ▶ **Don't expect every game to be a hot one.**

GRAPHICS	N/A
SONICS	N/A
GRAB FACTOR	88%
STAYING POWER	89%
A A RATING	88%



Jack and the Beanstalk was new to us on the Amstrad and tough too.

DISC VERSION

There are only six games on the disc version: *Killer Gorilla, Chuckie Egg, The Covenant, Jack and the Beanstalk, Gauntlet, 3D Star Strike.* These last two do not appear on the cassette version.

GAUNTLET

A version of the arcade classic *Defender*, and a very good one too. The action is fast, furious and colourful as you try to stop those nasty aliens stealing the humanoids.

3D STAR STRIKE

An outstanding vector graphic shoot-out, featuring four testing stages on your way to blasting enemy control bases on the moon's surface. It's fast, colourful, compulsive shoot-em-up action.

ACTION TEST

WRIGGLER

Romantic Robot/Devonshire House, £7.95 cass, £11.95 disk, joystick or keys

Despite looking more like a cute little caterpillar the wriggler of the title is a maggot. Fortunately he's a very cultured maggot who instead of the usual diet of rotting flesh much prefers the odd cup of tea or ice cream. He's taking part in the maggot marathon which hasn't been finished for thirty years. However it's less of a race and more of an exploration game.

This cutely-animated maggot has to find the route to the finish through 250 screens. These are split into six main areas, four of which need to be visited and two avoided like the galactic plague. All the areas are packed with nasty surprises for the unprepared maggot who will have to keep his wits about him to survive. A map might help as well.

> **SECOND OPINION**
>
> *Very cute and intermittently amusing, but a little slow for my taste. And there's no shooting. Graphics are clever and engaging, while the title tune is pretty impressive. But overall it's not incredibly demanding – it may appeal more to the younger player.*
>
> PC

The start is delightful as an ant fires a starting pistol to set you and another maggot on your way through the colourful screens. You don't have to wriggle after the other maggot though since it isn't in direct competition. The first hazard encountered is the ants which sap your energy.

Ants behave in two main ways. One lot just follow horizontal movement patterns between two points while the others are much nastier and home in on you. Like all the creatures in the game they sap your precious energy and if this drops too low poor wriggler literally falls apart as he turns first to a skeleton and then crumbles into dust.

Other hazards include red spiders who wander up and down screens and an evilly-animated white spider who creeps menacingly about. Large flies also bounce dangerously around some garden screens while in the aptly- named Hell and other underground sections acid drops may threaten you.

Energy can be replaced with goodies that are found lying around in the form of cups of tea, bottles ice cream and so on. These often can only be used when a good chunk of wriggler's energy has gone so that you can't accidentally waste them when he is strong.

One of the nice features about the game is the change in gravity between certain areas. In garden and scrubland you can move all over the screen but when you get into underground areas gravity is imposed and the game takes on more of a platform game feel, although there is no jumping. In these areas a parachute may well come in handy. A parachuting maggot!

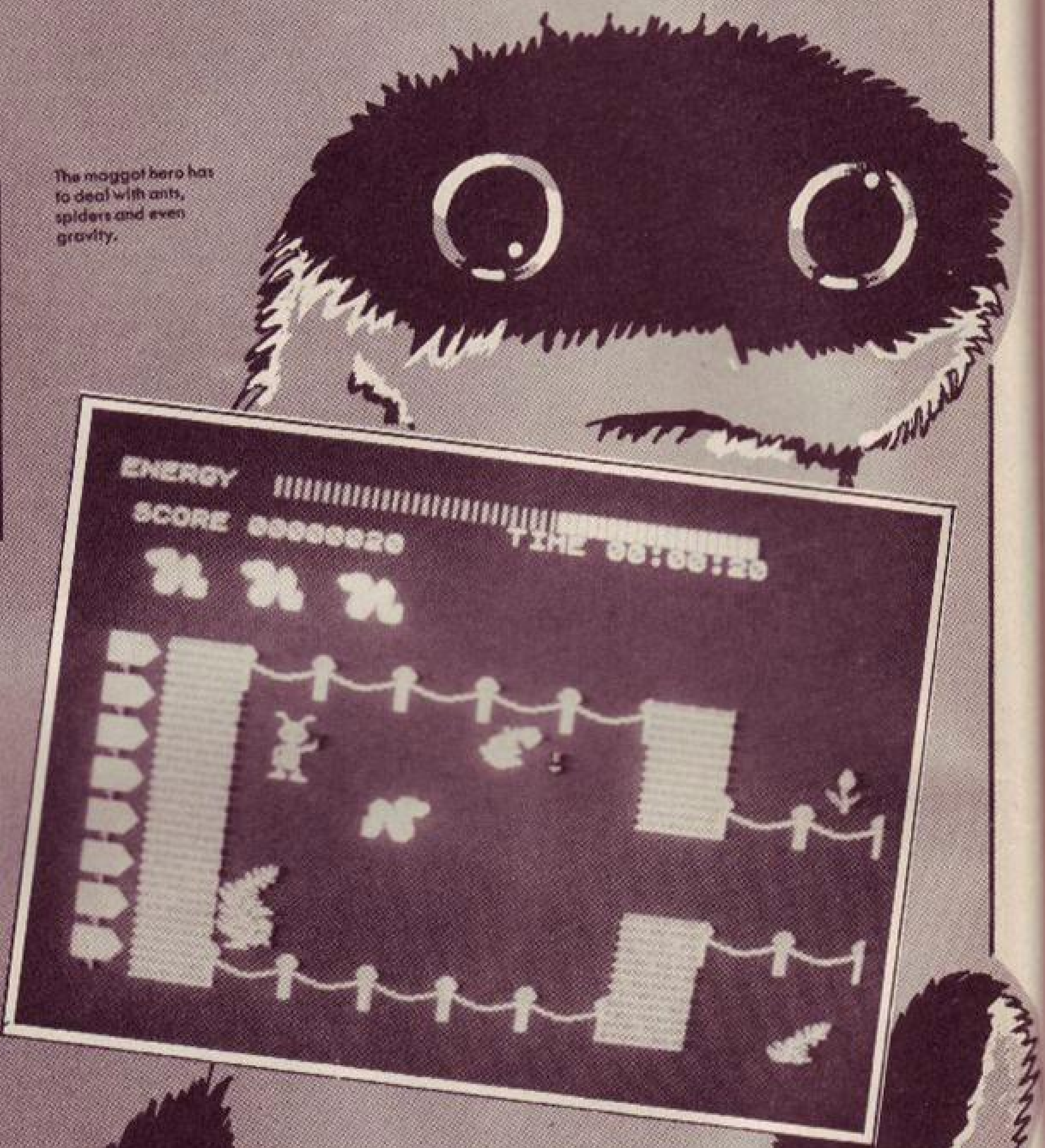
The game really needs mapping but as it sets up differently each time this may put a real strain on your cartographic resources. The later stages of the game have more puzzling to do as you have to open sections with keys to try to get to the planet surface and perhaps an end to the race.

The graphics are undeniably cute and clever and there's some good design for the various areas. The title music and game jingles are good too making a pleasing package to watch and listen to. The gameplay doesn't require much thinking about but it should still provide plenty of lasting challenge.

BW

GOOD NEWS

- **Cutesy, colourful graphics and animation.**
- **Plenty of screens to explore.**
- **Great change in gravity feature.**
- **Nice variety of features including insects, moving floors and heads.**



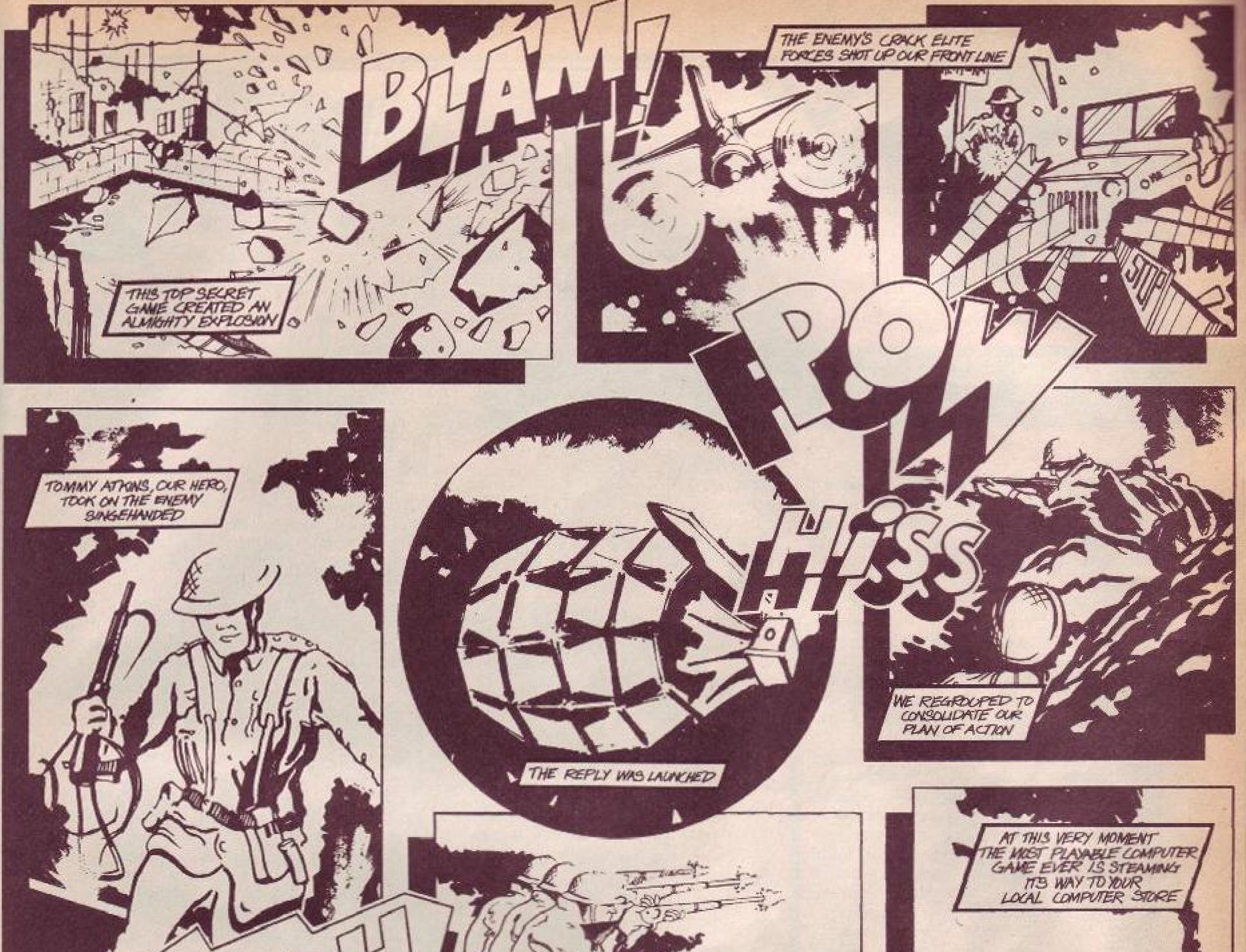
The maggot hero has to deal with ants, spiders and even gravity.

BAD NEWS

- **Gameplay is basically just exploring.**
- **Homing ants are very difficult to escape which can lose lives quickly.**

GRAPHICS	73%
SONICS	69%
GRAB FACTOR	62%
STAYING POWER	71%
A A RATING	68%

'That's a maggot?'





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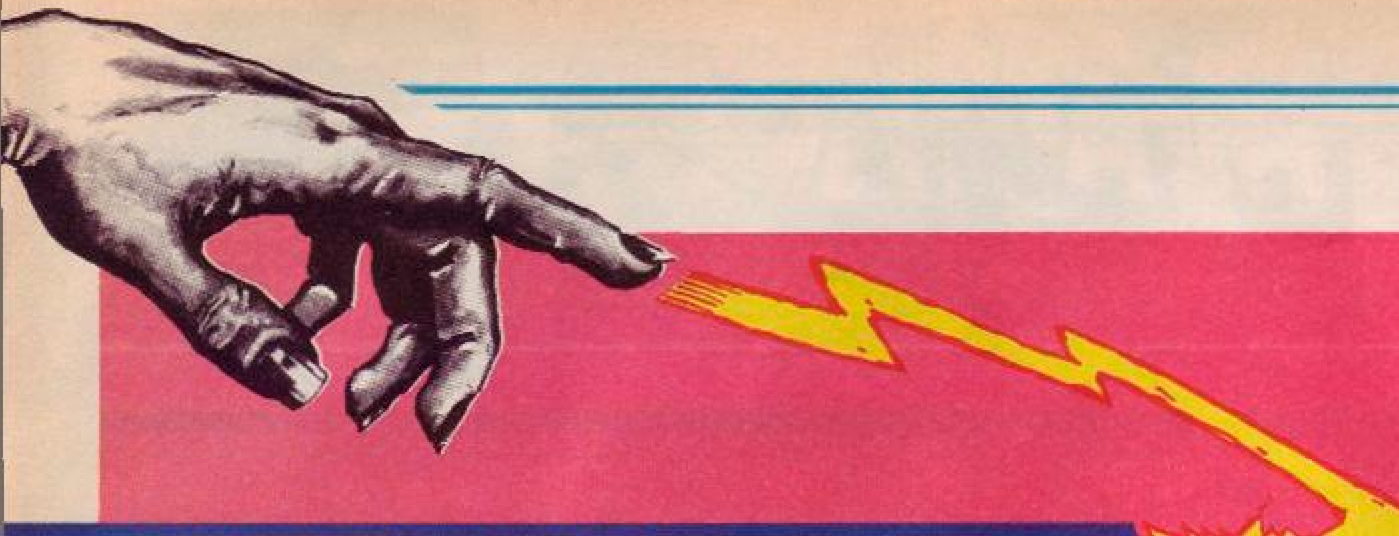
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Buchu the flying bullet rockets onto the screen

YIE AR KUNG-FU

Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

MASTERGAME

Yie aaarrrgh! Not *another* kung fu game I hear you cry – but wait until you've heard what's special about this one. Eight different opponents with changing styles and weapons, two graphic backgrounds and music are all included in a package that sets out to be more entertaining than *Fist* but just as tough.

It takes place against either a mountainous or temple backdrop with the opponents battling to knock each other out in the same 2D format as *Fist*. You control Oolong who has a range of ten moves at his disposal to fight eight devilish opponents.

Opponent number one is Bucha, a big, bald bruiser of a fellow, who flies on screen head first as if he's been shot out of a cannon and thereafter tries to batter you to the ground. The fighters have energy gauges and every time one of them lands a hit, marked by a small explosion, the opponent's gauge decreases by one section. When the gauge reaches zero the fighter will keel over leaving them with their little legs waving helplessly in the air. That means they've had it.

Music accompanies the action if you want it to and as the blows strike a satisfying crunching sound effect cracks out. As the fights progress points are scored for each hit that Oolong makes. He also gets a bonus for the amount of energy he has left if he defeats his opponent. Most of the fight action is very attractive, although there isn't a great deal of true animation, with the best part being the extraordinary leaps in the air that Oolong can perform to give his enemies the run around.

The second opponent is called Star and you'll quickly discover his dirty trick of throwing stars at you. These have to be jumped over or ducked under to avoid a hit. But once you're in close Star will be unable to throw his deadly projectiles. Even then the problems aren't over since he still fights hard and tries to get to a position where he can throw the stars again.

Nuncha is the third fighter. He wields two clubs joined by a chain. He whirls these around his head and is able to strike you from some distance with the extended reach of the clubs. Like Star he's more vulnerable if you can get in close but he will cause a lot of problems. All the fighters are dangerous if they manage to get a string of blows going since it is tough to interrupt but it can work in your favour if you can trap them at the side of the screen and hammer in your own series of blows.

The fourth opponent is Pole who again can strike you from distance with his stick and is another fat, fellow like Bucha. Pinning him down is quite difficult as he waves his stick all over the place. Club is opponent number five and lumbers around carrying a club and shield, looking something like a roman gladiator. All this weighty gear and his porky body mean you can defeat him with your speed and quick reactions.

Not so the next opponent, Sword, who nips about screen dealing flashing strokes with his vicious broad-bladed sword. It can get quite frustrating as he hacks away at you and Oolong fails to respond but it's satisfying when his skinny little body finally hits the floor. Tonfun is number seven on the menu and carries a nasty pair of wooden sticks. Speed is again the key and you need to bewitch your opponent with flashing hands and feet.

The last opponent is Blues. He brings no nasty weapons to threaten you but is made from exactly the same mould as Oolong but in a different colour. He has exactly the same

SECOND OPINION

At first sight this seemed to be a comedy game – the first opponent, Bucha, arrives on the scene like a trained seal diving for a beach-ball at the circus. But Bucha's pretty butch, even if he does seem to have a slight weight problem, and it's rapidly made clear that this is going to be a tough old scrap.

What makes the game so entertaining, despite the recent rash of bash-'em-ups, is the variety of foes. Each of the eight has his own peculiarities and weapons, making your progress – if you make any – extremely problematic. Graphics and sound are excellent, but it's a shame you can't take on another player in this very classy punch-up.

One thing puzzles me though: why is our hero named after a kind of tea? Can you imagine a karate champ called Darjeeling or PG Tips? I think Imagine owe us an explanation.

PC



Blues has no weapon but leaps like you do



Sword is very fast and deadly with that broad blade



Tonfun wields a couple of nasty sticks



Star delivers a deadly, spinning, metal star



capabilities as you and will leap all over the place and trade the full range of blows in a very fast and evenly matched battle. Success against all eight opponents takes you back to Bucha, but this time all the fighters are even more fiercesome.

BW

Nuncho waves his stick and chains at you



GOOD NEWS

- **Two colourful backgrounds.**
- **Excellent oriental music to accompany the game.**
- **Eight different opponents.**
- **Range of weapons to be dealt with.**
- **Good fighting graphics and skills.**
- **All fighters can be very tough to beat.**
- **Increasing difficulty.**

BAD NEWS

- **No true two player option.**
- **Not true animation on fighting moves.**

GRAPHICS	91%
SONICS	82%
GRAB FACTOR	93%
STAYING POWER	92%
A A RATING	92%



Pole wields a his vicious long stick

The Range of Moves

Like *Fist* this game has a number of different moves which can be used against varying opponents with different degrees of success.

FLYING PUNCH: leap into the air and hammer your fist into the bad guy's face.

FLYING KICK: the same thing with your foot so you can rub his face in the dirt.

RISING KICK: deliver a slap across the face with the side of your foot.

LUNGE PUNCH: let him have it right in the guts with the fist.

ROUNDHOUSE KICK: a quick turn and your foot arrives in the enemy'smidriff.

ANKLE KICK: a sneaky low kick when he's not expecting it.

LEG SWEEP: pays dividends at distance and close quarters.

STRIDE PUNCH: a real shocker this as you slide in low and punch upwards. Ouch!

GROUND KICK: if he tries going over the top just lie back and let him have it.

FACE PUNCH: look him straight in the eye and bop him one on the nose.

HOOK PUNCH: just when he's not ready for it wrap your fist around his head.

JUMPS: you can go left, right or straight up in the air as if off a trampoline.

DUCK: nip underneath those high blows.

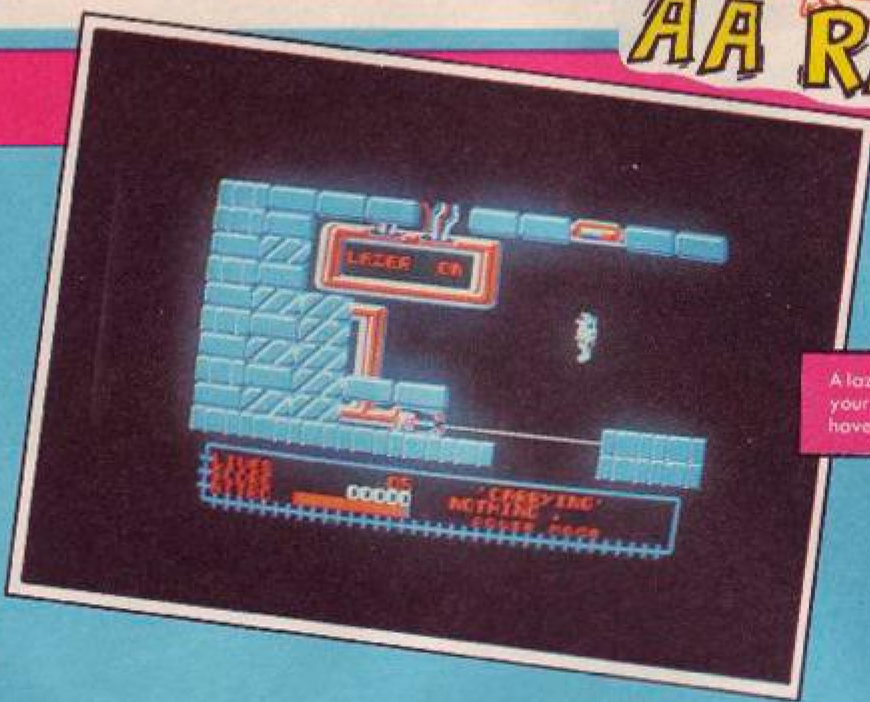


Club is a bit slow but has a shield for protection

OBSIDIAN
Artic, £7.95 cass

For those of you who don't know what obsidian is (like me until I reached for a dictionary), it's a volcanic rock that looks like bottle-glass. This may well prove a clue within the game which is set inside an asteroid and like *Strangeloop* combines arcade skills, exploration and some tricky puzzles.

The story is a familiar one in that your task is to explore the ship, carved out of the asteroid, avoiding the robot guards and activating the power engines before making your escape. The scenario may not win prizes but the tough task and graphics will. There are five engines which have to be activated and each one will be triggered by a particular object.



A lazer barrier blocks your way so you'll have to turn it off

SECOND OPINION

The first thing that struck me about this game was the graphics – bright, clear and featuring some unusual colours. The game itself is not very original, but it's so well-executed that it deserves the praise it's getting here.

Controlling your man is tricky when he's airborne, and I missed the opportunity to shoot aliens. But you can't have everything.

PC

These are found in many of the picturesque locations made up of man made materials and the asteroid rock. The screens vary greatly in colour and design, but many hold traps for the unwary. Objects that you need appear in gravity boxes in ceilings from where they can be collected and carried one at a time. They can be used to activate or deactivate doors, barriers and other features either by touch or by using the fire button.

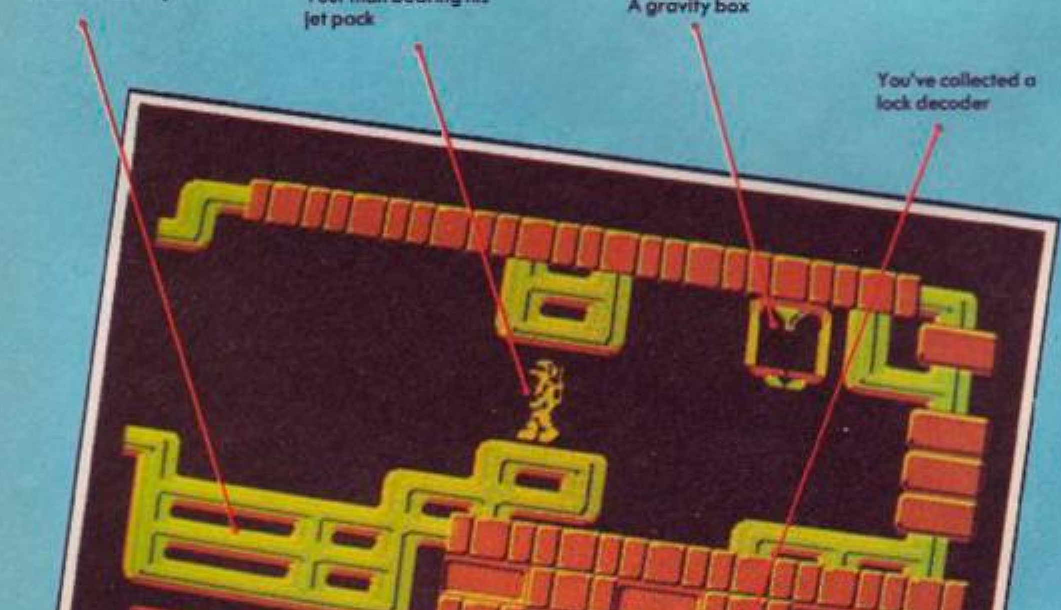
The fellow who does all this for you has two main ways of getting around the ship, either by walking or flying around with his jet pack. The latter is a faster way of whizzing about but unfortunately it consumes fuel or 'nitro'. If this runs out it's bye-bye to one of the five lives. There are various points where nitro can be replenished but watch out for the ones that sap it.

A more immediate death will occur if one of the robot security devices is encountered in the form of a device moving in a set movement pattern or a laser barrier blocking the way or beamed across the floor. Since things happen very fast you have to keep an eye out for these and be very careful when trying to get past them. Some are really sneaky and shoot separate missiles that catch you unawares but also follow a movement pattern.

In the early stages of the game there isn't much choice of objects or locations so that most of your actions are straightforward and obvious. However as the playing area opens up it soon becomes clear that many objects will be required to complete the game and that some hard thinking as well as trial and error will be needed. Early uses for an energy key, lazer pass and lock decoder are fairly clear as some objects and locations are marked but when you start encountering blue glass, suicide bombs and ice crystals things start to get more complicated.

The graphics are well drawn and the animation on the main character is good for both walking and flying. I found the flying controls too responsive at first but they can be mastered with some practice. The puzzle element is once again vital to the game's success and you get a kick out of every new area of the game you open up. There aren't too many unexpected touches within the game but some imaginative thought will be required with some problems to conquer them. The only drawback is that getting past some of the robot guards can be frustratingly difficult and lose precious lives while in the midst of thinking about a knotty problem.

BW



GOOD NEWS

- **Lots of attractive, well designed screens.**
- **Plenty of puzzles to solve.**
- **A wide variety of objects and uses.**
- **Good mix of arcade and adventure skills.**

BAD NEWS

- **Robot guards can prove annoying as you flick between screens.**
- **Jet pack is too responsive for some situations.**

GRAPHICS	85%
SONICS	40%
GRAB FACTOR	78%
STAYING POWER	86%
A A RATING	81%

Money, Money, ...

How to play

In case you're so old you've forgotten them, or so young you've never played, here's a brief crash course in the very easy rules: your aim is to get to the top – square 60. The laws of chance dictate how many squares you can move at any one time. If you land at the foot of a ladder you shoot up to its top. If you land on the head of a snake you slither down to its tail. As a further element of chance we've introduced the revolutionary AA squares – these are explained further on in the instructions.

What you need: 1 Amstrad CPC computer; some human beings; a January copy of Amstrad Action; counters; Christmas goodwill(optional).

To take part in this festive fun, you first have to type in the short listing printed below. That's because Arnold takes care of all that tedious dice rolling stuff for you – as well as giving you some nice, and some nasty, surprises.

Arnold doesn't, though, provide you with counters so you'll need to find enough buttons, tiddleywinks etc. for however many players there are. There's no limit to the number of participants except good sense. More than four and things could get a little crowded.

First of all type in the listing. The program will ask how many players wish to take part and will then prompt each one in turn with 'Forward or Back?' This is so that you can take advantage of tempting ladders which might lie behind rather than in front of you. If you go off the board at either end, you bounce back e.g. if you're on 57 and you throw a 6, you'll go forward to 60 then back three squares to 57 again. The same principle applies if you go back at the start. To win you MUST land exactly on 60.

Landing on an AA square opens up all sorts of possibilities – again, the computer will prompt you. Basically, if you throw a high number something pleasant will happen. Throw a low number and you could get a nasty shock.

Landing on another player sends him or her back to the start. Tough life, isn't it?

Of course, if the computer tells you to do something impossible – like moving back to the head of the nearest snake when you're on square 1 – just ignore the command.

If you've found all that confusing, don't worry – the program will prompt you at every step in your brilliant career, leaving you to enjoy the game. So go ahead and make that million.

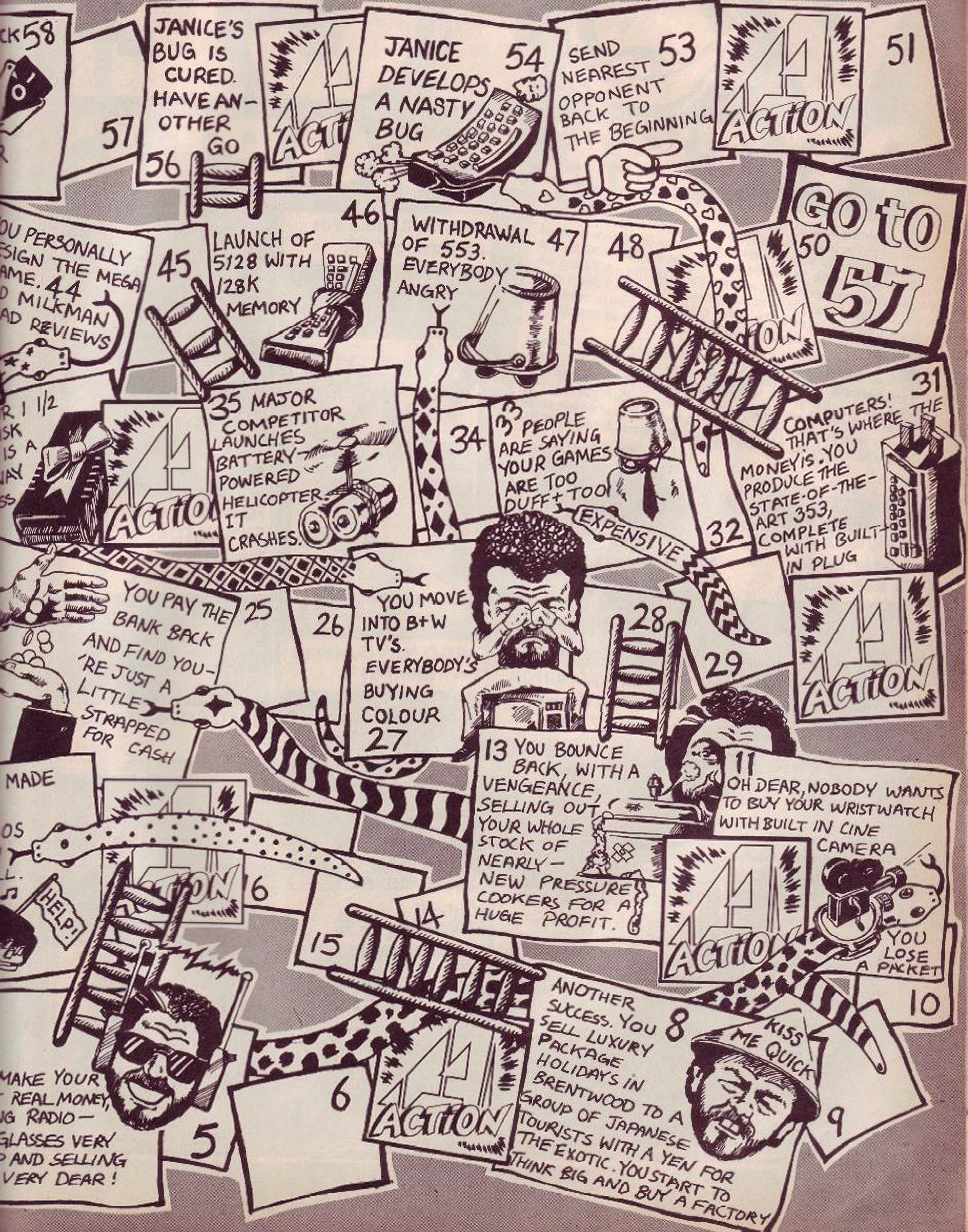
The game prog

```
10 RANDOMIZE TIME:CLS:INPUT"How many players";P:IF p<1 OR p>9 THEN 10
20 FOR i=1 TO p:CLS:PRINT"PLAYER";i
25 IF fl(i)<0 THEN PRINT"Sorry, you miss this turn...": fl(i)=fl(i)+1: GOTO 120
30 PRINT"Forward or back (f/b)?"
40 i$=INKEY$:IF i$="f"THEN i$="forward  " ELSE IF i$="b" THEN i$="backward  " ELSE 40
50 PRINT:PRINT"Move ";i$;:FOR j=1 TO RND*6+1: r=INT(RND*6)+1
60 PRINT CHR$(8)+CHR$(8)+STR$(r);:SOUND 1,10,5:FOR k=1 TO 500:NEXT:NEXT:PRINT" space";:
 IF r>1 THEN PRINT"s" ELSE PRINT
70 FOR k=1 TO 800:NEXT:PRINT:PRINT"Have you landed on an AA square (y/n)?":PRINT"(press
 Shift-W if you've won)"
80 i$=INKEY$:IF i$="W" THEN 200 ELSE IF i$="n" THEN 130: ELSE IF i$<>"y" THEN 80
90 IF RND>0.6 THEN ON r GOSUB 140,150,160,170,180,190:PRINT:PRINT F$: GOTO 120
100 PRINT:IF r<4 THEN PRINT"Go back"; ELSE PRINT"Advance";
110 s=ABS(INT(RND*10*(r-3.5)))+1: PRINT s;"space";:IF s>1 THEN PRINT"s!" ELSE PRINT
120 PRINT"(press any key to continue)"
125 IF INKEY$="" THEN 125
130 NEXT i: GOTO 20
140 f$="Miss two turns!!": fl(i)=-2:RETURN
150 f$="Go backwards until you encounter a snake-head. Go down it!":RETURN
160 f$="Miss a turn!": fl(i)=-1: RETURN
170 f$="Advance to the next ladder. Go up it!":RETURN
180 f$="Have another turn!": i=i-1: RETURN
190 f$="Land on the player ahead of you!!": RETURN
200 CLS: PRINT"CONGRATULATIONS, PLAYER";i;"!!":PRINT:PRINT"To play again press a key."
210 IF INKEY$="" THEN 210 ELSE RUN
```



Money!

It's often said that business is a game – but a deadly serious one. We're giving you the chance to find out how much fun it can be too, with our Arnold variation on the classic game of Snakes and Ladders. Your aim – to make it to the top of the greasy pole in the cut-throat world of home computers.



VICE OF THE PEOPLE

'Let the people be heard', thundered the voice from on high.'Let Amstrad owner speak unto Amstrad owner', it went on. Trembling in our miserable office, we obeyed. You wrote in. We've printed your comments on the games we reviewed in the last issue, and on some we're reviewing in this, accompanied by the AA Rating we gave it. On the whole, you seem to agree with us. If you don't, then get scribbling and let us know. If you do agree, write in anyway – it's helpful to everyone to get as wide a spread of opinion as possible.

Remember that you should aim for something like the Second Opinion boxes in our reviews: you don't need to explain the game, but give your opinion of it. Why not add your own ratings to the comment, so we can compare them even more closely to ours?

Send your comments on a postcard or the back of an envelope to: *Voice of the People, Amstrad Action, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PS.*

SOUL OF A ROBOT, Mastertronic AA Rating 84%

Extremely good graphics and animation with completely flicker-free graphics, none of which overlap. Mastertronic's best-ever game. It puts most full-price games to shame.
Joe Le Sage, London

Bit close to *Nonterraqueous* this, although none can complain about that. Sound is very under-used, which seems to be the done. Plenty of stayig power in the size of the game, but the jump control is very frustrating.
Nick Chaplin, Maidenhead



A far better game than *Nonterraqueous*. The graphics are very colourful and very detailed, the sound is good and the game is more fun to play.
David Baxter, Carluke

FIGHTING WARRIOR, Melbourne House AA Rating 75%

This didn't quite live up to my expectations. The animation is excellent but I don't like the idea of see-through characters and the sound isn't quite orchestral. But overall a good addictive game which I kept going back to.
Michael Clark, Midlothian

MEXICO '86, Qual-Soft AA Rating 68%

Excellent football management simulation, with numerous skill and sophistication options. Gripping decisions can be made during, as well as before, matches. if the scenario becomes repetitive, Qual-Soft have admirably left the program unprotected, so one can fiddle around. Highly recommended.
John Barrow, Wallsend

HI RISE, Bubble Bus AA Rating 73%

Nice graphics and nice game, but no real depth. Not as good as their last release, Wizard's Lair.
Anonymous



ARGO NAVIS, Kuma AA Rating 61%

Kuma's best Amstrad effort yet! A graphically good, arcade search and collect, shoot and destroy game. A good idea that has been well implemented. The large playing area and complex platform puzzles make this a hard game to crack.
David Baxter, Carluke

3D GRAND PRIX, Amsoft AA Rating 87%

You almost feel you are driving at Silverstone or any other of the other six tracks. Good colourful graphics and realistic sound make this a Formula 1 game.
K. Stafferton, Northampton

For sheer racing this is excellent, possessing much of the excitement and frustration of the real thing. However, it may not have much lasting appeal for many as there is no track editing facility and the early circuits may become rather tedious. It is expensive at £9.95 and just falls short of an AA Rave in my view.
N.D. Riske, Newbury

The provision of the rear-view mirrors is an excellent touch. Not as fast as Rally II, but more of a challenge.
Gery Hughes, Cranleigh

Great graphics, good use of sound, exhilerating action – this game takes pole position.

David Baxter, Carluke

FORMULA ONE SIMULATOR, Mastertronic AA Rating 73%

An excellent driving game. Great graphics of you, but the other cars aren't mind-blowing. But the sound is pretty rubbish.
Joe Le Sage, London

BATTLE OF BRITAIN, PSS AA Rating 81%

I really like the air combat part of the game, the graphics are great and there are plenty of game options. A thinking man's version of Beach Head. Indeed, what that game could, and should, have been like.
David Baxter, Carluke

THE NEVER-ENDING STORY, Ocean AA Rating 82%

I'm not much of an adventure addict, but I enjoyed this game. the graphics are superb, making full use of the colours, and the tune at the beginning is great. the game is a must for adventure addicts and for non-adventurers alike.
Donald Sharey, Scunthorpe



THEY SOLD A MILLION

The Hit Squad, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk

This special compilation of four classic games is being released to catch the Christmas market. It features three games that are already best-sellers on the Amstrad and a new one, *Sabre Wulf*, that has only recently been converted. We reviewed the three other games in issue one but if you already have these three then don't fret – Ultimate are releasing *Sabre Wulf* on its own for £7.95.

Sabre Wulf

Set in a tropical jungle this game started Sabreman on the adventures which later took him to *Knight Lore* and the forthcoming *Nightshade*. His task is to recover four sections of amulet from the forest maze and then escape from the jungle.

There are 256 screens packed with colourful vegetation and a whole host of dangerous animals. Sabreman is armed only with his trusty sword with which to fight off the wild animals but there are some other things that will help him on his way.

The four pieces of amulet are spread randomly around the maze, although this is limited to a number of regular locations. They are picked up by passing over them, as are all the other objects in the game. Most objects like swords, shields, treasure chests and doubloons don't do anything when picked up except increase your points total but one object gives you extra lives.

The jungle paths along which you move are all either horizontal or vertical with the occasional clearing. Sabreman waves his sword in front of him and this leaves him vulnerable to attack when moving up or down paths. The animals that threaten you come in a wide range from harmless-looking cuddly beasts to the dreaded Sabre Wulf itself. This prowls about and should be avoided at all costs since it is indestructible.

You can't kill hippos and rhinos that thunder along paths either but they can be turned back by your sword. All the other animals can be exploded with a quick thrust though. This doesn't clear the screen for long since more beasts will materialise to chase you. Another danger is a ball of fire that appears if Sabreman spends too long on one screen. This too has to be avoided like the plague.

Help is at hand in the form of coloured orchids which flower occasionally; if you pass through them they give you a strange power. Yellow ones make you sick, killing everything else on screen but holding you up for precious seconds. Red ones slow you down but make you invulnerable. Blue ones also make you immune but speed you up considerably. Purple flowers reverse the key or joystick controls but again make you invincible. White flowers merely remove the effect of any of the other four.

The game is mostly just a matter of charging around killing things with little brainwork involved except for mapping the game. The graphics are very colourful with zappy sound effects making a pleasing game that may take a while to complete.

BW



SECOND OPINION

Nice to see this classic making it on to the Arnold. It's no longer a stunningly original game, but is still very enjoyable. Ultimate7s graphivcs and animation are up to the usual lofty standard.

PC

GOOD NEWS

- **256 colourful screens.**
- **Good animation and variety of animals.**
- **Demanding arcade action as you battle to stay alive.**
- **The orchids are a very nice touch.**

BAD NEWS

- **Little brainwork involved.**
- **Annoying deaths when going up or down paths.**

GRAPHICS	85%
SONICS	53%
GRAB FACTOR	83%
STAYING POWER	77%
A A RATING	80%



Sabreman makes his way around a deadly jungle.



Challenging the dictator's naval fleet.

Beach-Head

This classic battle involves you in an assault on a dictator's fortress. You face naval engagemnets, air attacks and even deadly tank battles as you battle against the odds to destroy the fortress of Kuhn-Lin.

The game calls for several different skills and tactics for its varied stages and these, combined with some nice graphics, earn it a place among the bestsellers.

GRAPHICS	87%
SONICS	37%
GRAB FACTOR	86%
STAYING POWER	80%
A A RATING	82%

Jet Set Willy

The new shortened version to fall in line with those on other machines. It features Willy in his palatial mansion as he tries to clear up after a wild party by collecting up all the objects left lying around. It's a classic platform/exploration game featuring all sorts of weird hazards like killer toilets and of course Maria the mad housekeeper.

It's got masses of screens and plenty of objects to collect, many of which are placed in diabolical places to get to.

GRAPHICS	56%
SONICS	67%
GRAB FACTOR	85%
STAYING POWER	87%
A A RATING	85%



Miner Willy in his perilous mansion.



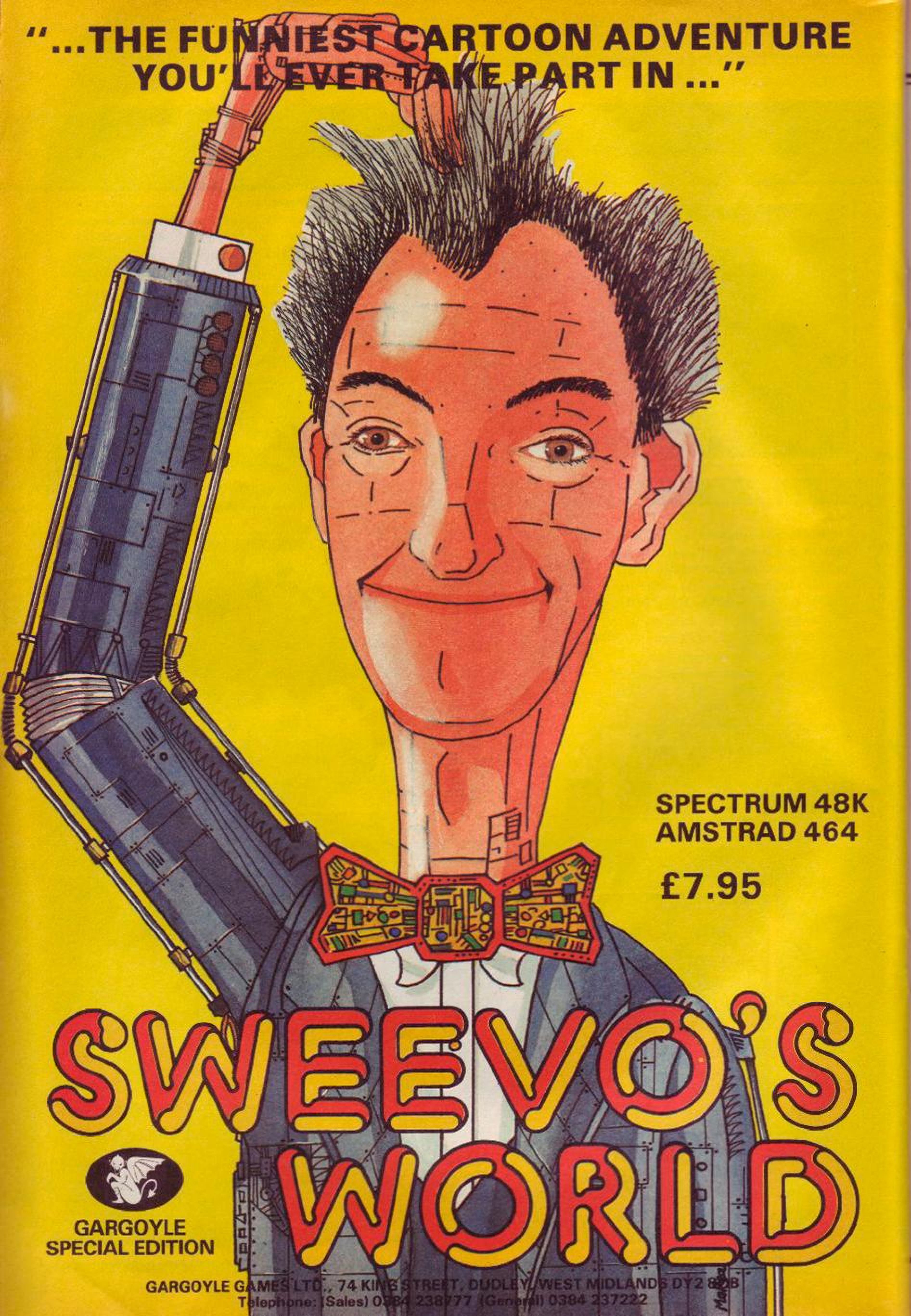
Daley makes another bid for a gold medal.

Daley Thompson's Decathlon

This game has probably broken more joysticks and destroyed more keyboards than any other as players pound away trying to better scores and records in the ten decathlon events. There's lots of colourful, well-animated action as you put Daley through his paces.

All ten events are there with some needing a degree of skill as well as hard work. It's very slickly produced and as they say, it's what your right arm's for.

GRAPHICS	86%
SONICS	66%
GRAB FACTOR	83%
STAYING POWER	78%
A A RATING	81%


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RENEGADE

Kuma, £6.95 cass, £13.95 disk, joystick or keys

Kuma's prodigious production of Amstrad programs continues apace but unfortunately I think this one shows some signs of not having the sort of thought put into it that it could have. It's a sort of 3D *Berzerk* where a man charges round a robot-filled maze in search of objects and with little else to worry about except falling asleep.

The maze is constructed of 3D rooms with the front walls removed so that you can see into them. Viewed from this angle above the action your man will move diagonally up and down but horizontally left and right. The doorways appear just as black squares in the wall and walking into them flicks you to the next screen. Within each room you are likely to find only three types of thing: yourself, some nasties and the occasional static object.

SECOND OPINION

For about ten minutes I almost enjoyed this game, as I plodded around blasting the odd nasty and mapping my progress. Then the crudity of the graphics and the tedium of the scenario began to weigh more and more heacily on me. Boredom set in and stayed put. Kuma have done much better than this in the past. Let's hope they will in the future.

PC

The task is to proceed through the ten levels of the game collecting a particular group of objects on each one that will allow you to unlock a door to a new section of maze. On the tenth level is a crystal which you have to get back out of the maze.

The nasties take various forms but stay in familiar movement patterns and are split into two groups – shooting and non-shooting. They are fairly easily dealt with until you encounter them in large numbers in a small space. You have a gun with which you can shoot most hostile presences but avoidance is usually possible as well. If you sustain enough bullet hits or walk into a nasty then you lose a life. These can be replaced by picking up the skulls in the maze which give an extra life even though they look very menacing.

Movement is unusual since it operates on an *Asteroid* basis of rotating left/right and moving forward or back, which may take some getting used to. One nice feature of the game is that occasionally picking up an object will mean that the maze is reconfigured, possibly even trapping you in a small section.



This is the starting 3D room – not very inspiring.

The graphics and sound effects are the game's major problems with both being on the crude side leaving very little to get excited about. The size of the game is more impressive but with the gameplay being simple moving and shooting even this doesn't count for much. Even at £6.95 this is overpriced and I found it greatly disappointing.

BW

G O O D N E W S

- ▶ **Large playing area.**

B A D N E W S

- ▶ **Crude graphics.**
- ▶ **Unimpressive sound effects.**
- ▶ **Unusual control.**
- ▶ **Little to do but walk around shooting things and picking up objects.**

GRAPHICS	32%
SONICS	26%
GRAB FACTOR	29%
STAYING POWER	22%
A A RATING	27%

DOGSBODY

Bug Byte/Argus Press, £2.95 cass, joystick or keys

Bug Byte is a very old software house that bit the dust a while back but now they've been reincarnated as a budget label. This is their first Amstrad release. It's reminiscent of games like *Dig Dug* and *Quango*, where you dig in the earth to collect objects and avoid monsters, and has the same sort of panic nature with some exploration thrown in.

As Dogsbody you have to rescue 192 puppies from the castle stronghold of Dr Dogmush. The castle is a maze composed of 25 screens within which are contained the puppies in small groups, 50 gremlins and robots, flowers and rocks. The maze is composed of flick screens so that often it is difficult to know what you will encounter when moving off one screen and onto another.

The groups of puppies are dotted all over the maze, many in the hardest to get at locations of course but flashing to indicate their presence. Most of the maze tunnels are filled with earth with the occasional clear area where all gremlins and robots may lie in wait.

These nasty pieces of work are the defenders of the stronghold and if Dogsbody touches them he loses a life. Gremlins and robots are best avoided completely but sometimes there is no alternative but to release one into the maze. They are very persistent and will chase you all over so that they will have to be dealt with.

There are two main ways of dealing with this: either by crushing them with a rock or by blocking the trail behind you with a flower. The rocks are fortunately harmless to Dogsbody so that he can stand underneath them or have them land on his head with injury.

SECOND OPINION

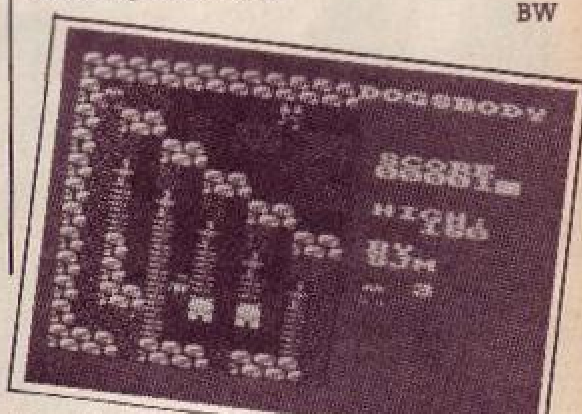
This is an old idea but none the worse for that. It's executed with a certain amount of skill and charm, and is going to be far from easy to crack. While 25 screens might not seem a lot these days, each one is progressively more difficult and will require a lot of attention and speed to crack.

PC

Flowers can be used to block the way by removing the earth from above them and they will grow into the space. Again there is no danger to the canine hero who can stand above a growing plant without fear.

The graphics and sound are nothing to write home about but the game's quality lies in the addictiveness of the action. As you gradually explore more of the maze it becomes a real challenge trying to work out how to complete new areas and get the timing right to avoid the robots and gremlins. This certainly won't be an easy game to complete because it needs some luck as well as skill in choosing where to go.

BW



Lots of boulders, plants, gremlins and puppies to be dealt with.

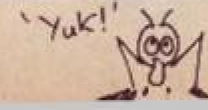
G O O D N E W S

- ▶ **Tough arcade challenge.**
- ▶ **25 diabolically designed screens to make life difficult.**
- ▶ **Nice features in the boulders and plants.**

B A D N E W S

- ▶ **Flick screen maze can cause frustrating deaths.**
- ▶ **25 screens isn't that big a playing area.**

GRAPHICS	56%
SONICS	33%
GRAB FACTOR	71%
STAYING POWER	59%
A A RATING	68%



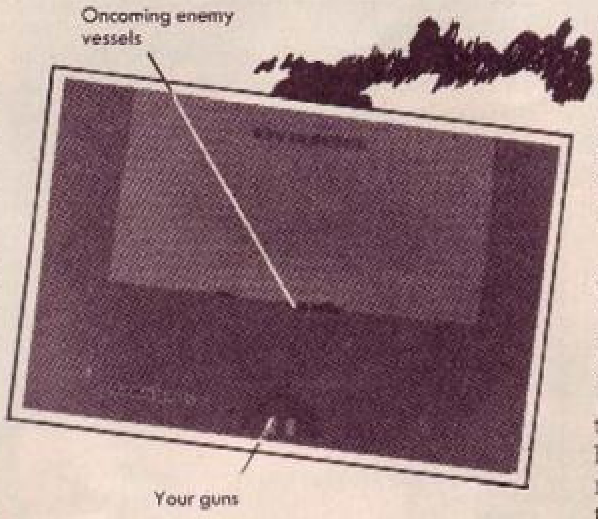
ASSAULT ON PORT STANLEY

Amsoft/Shirekilo, £8.95 cass, £12.95 cass, joystick only

Amsoft must be hoping that the Falkland's war will do for this game what it did for the Tory party's standing in the polls. It takes the form of a three stage attack where you control a ship or a helicopter as you try to get to Port Stanley.

The first stage places you in control of a warship as it steams towards the islands. As it slices its way through the exclusion zone it encounters lots of ships intent on blowing it out of the water, making them fair game for your guns. Once the ships are in range three shells will send a ship to the bottom (along with all hands), only to be replaced by another one. If the enemy get close enough they will shell your vessel and if damage reaches 100 per cent you're so much submerged scrap metal.

When the ships get close to you they start to circle quite quickly, making them harder to hit and allowing more ships to get within striking range. If you survive long enough and get close enough to the islands, which is



purely a matter of time rather than direction, then planes may also appear over the horizon to harass you. You can't shoot these but you can move off screen where they can't shoot you.

Not long after encountering the planes you reach the island, at which point a helicopter takes off from the ship to challenge the second and third stages of the game. The helicopter may also take off earlier but this will mean it does not have enough fuel to make it to the island. After taking off the chopper has to take on the waves of enemy fighters surging out to protect 'their' islands.

The planes fly in from the top of the screen while your helicopter flies up from the bottom to meet them. They move down screen, often diagonally, shooting as they go and you have to shoot them down or avoid them. If the chopper gets destroyed it's back to the ship or to another chopper if the ship had already proceeded far enough. Fuel runs out continually through this stage but if there is enough to survive the onslaught then you move onto a *River Raid* section.

This is again viewed from above. The chopper has to be guided down a scrolling

GEOFF CAPES STRONGMAN

Martech, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

Geoff Capes has been Britain's, Europe's and the World's strongest man. Now he's out to be the strongest man on a micro against the likes of Daley Thompson and Brian Jacks. They are dwarfed by Geoff in real life, but what about the game?

It stars Geoff in six events where you have to first get him to the peak of fitness and then control his muscular effort through the event to complete his task within a time limit. You start with a frantic bit of joystick waggling or key bashing to determine Geoff's fitness. This gives you a percentage fitness which you should aim to get over 80 and 90 if you really get going. The waggling only lasts for five seconds, though, so 1500 metre stamina isn't needed. Thank goodness.

Once Geoff has got his strength up, it has to be distributed between eight parts of his body. These are split into two sections, the upper and lower body, with particular muscles being used for each event but all of them being pink and hairy. After some practice you'll spot which muscles are used for which event and allocate accordingly.

Now you're ready for the first event – the lorry pull. Geoff appears tied to the front of a lorry with his head down like a bull about to charge. He doesn't do any charging though because that truck really takes some moving. Once the event starts you have two things to control: the effort Geoff puts in and the muscles he uses.

The effort is shown on a a percentage bar – the higher it is the faster the muscle strength is used up. The muscles are shown on either side of the screen and one at a time the boxes turn yellow, indicating which one is to be used. You move an arrow about selecting the muscles, turning the box green when you get the right one. If you get it right Geoff starts plodding along in fits and starts dragging the lorry towards a line. If he crosses it within the qualifying time then it's on to the next event.

First you get to reallocate strength left over from the last event. This happens after every event and it helps to remember which muscles will be used next. The log chop pictures an axe over a log which you have to get through. It is made up of three different areas; soft, hard and knotted, and you have to find the weakest area. The axe moves left and right with its speed being determined by the effort bar. Pressing fire puts in a chop. This is probably the least interesting of the events both for gameplay and graphics – but don't tell Geoff I said so.

Barrel loading next and here Geoff really starts to get going, having to plod back and forth across the screen dumping barrels into a lorry. Manic waggling gets him to the barrel where he impolitely squats, poking his bottom in your direction, and you waggle again to pick up the barrel. Then you allocate muscles as directed to get him to the lorry again.

The car roll has Geoff throwing a poor, defenceless Volkswagen onto its roof, whereupon the windscreen shatters. This is again done through the allocation of muscle strength and effort but if you make a mistake the car starts to roll backwards. The fairground bell is the fifth event: you don't have to ring it but just achieve a certain height by waggling to increase effort and pressing fire at the right moment to hit.

Last is the Sumo wrestling which is a tough event of timing as Geoff and another fighter squat in a circle and try to force each other out of it. This one can be rather frustrating and I'd have preferred a straight waggle, but it does offer a different challenge if you can master it.

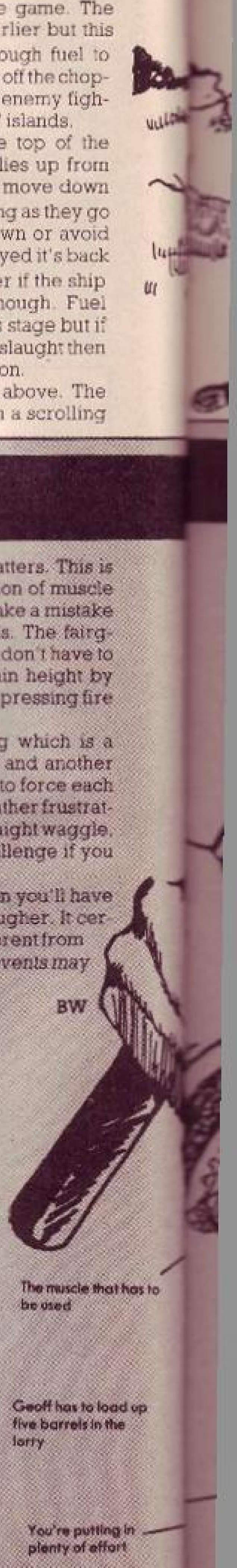
Get through that lot and then you'll have to do it all again, only it gets tougher. It certainly has something a little different from the usual joystick bash but six events may prove limiting.

BW

SECOND OPINION

You don't have to have muscles like Geoff to play this game, but it would help. The waggling is not for the weak of arm or faint of heart, even if it isn't quite as furious as those old Decathlon *games. The events are novel, and the graphics are not bad – Geoff is an unmistakable figure. I wasn't keen on the muscle icons, though; they are pretty repulsive to look at. The main drawback to the game is the limited number of events, which may mean that fitter players will lose interest.*

PC



The muscle that has to be used

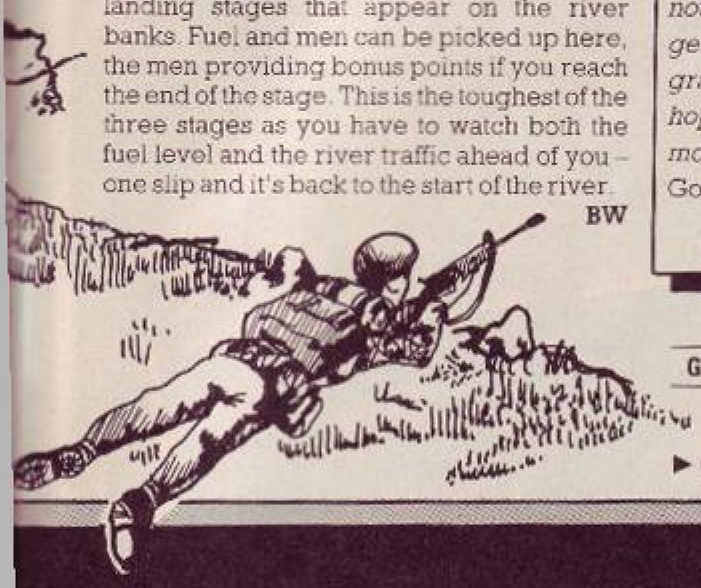
Geoff has to load up five barrels in the lorry

You're putting in plenty of effort

river, avoiding ships and barrage balloons on the way. The screen scrolls downwards and the helicopter can move forward or back on screen as well as left and right. The boats and balloons move left and right across the river and again you either have to shoot them or avoid them.

Fuel continues to run out. To replenish it the chopper has to be landed at one of the landing stages that appear on the river banks. Fuel and men can be picked up here, the men providing bonus points if you reach the end of the stage. This is the toughest of the three stages as you have to watch both the fuel level and the river traffic ahead of you – one slip and it's back to the start of the river.

BW



SECOND OPINION

The utterly tasteless title is not redeemed by the game itself. The first sequence is done much better in Beach Head, *while the* second two are pale imitations of the old Atari game River Raid. *There is virtually nothing in the way of excitement until you get halfway through the final stage. Neither graphics nor sound are distinguished. Let's hope they come up with something a bit more interesting if they bring us* Attack on Goose Green.

PC

G O O D N E W S

► **Good graphics on the third stage.**

► **Gets very tough and demands plenty of skill towards the end.**

► **No "Argie-bashing" nonsense in the instructions or game.**

B A D N E W S

► **No original ideas in the game.**

► **Simple gameplay and graphics for first two stages.**

► **Contender for tackiest game title of the year.**

► **Third stage can become overly frustrating.**

GRAPHICS	54%
SONICS	34%
GRAB FACTOR	59%
STAYING POWER	62%
A A RATING	58%



G O O D N E W S

► **Good combination of waggling and skill.**

► **Varied events which appeared in the TV shows.**

► **Muscle allocation icons are novel.**

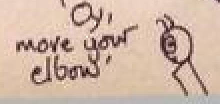
B A D N E W S

► **Most animation isn't very complicated.**

► **Log chop gives you little to do.**

► **Six events isn't very many.**

GRAPHICS	63%
SONICS	34%
GRAB FACTOR	64%
STAYING POWER	72%
A A RATING	68%



ACTION TEST

TOMBSTOWNE

Amsoft Premier, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disc, jooystick or keys

Amsoft have a curious habit of going the whole hog on plugging mediocre games like *Glen Hoddle Soccer* and *3D Stuntrider* while good games like this one, that make you think, sneak out without any ballyhoo or fuss. The game is reminiscent of *Pyjamarama* in the arrangement of rooms and tasks to be done but graphically it's much different.

Your task is to rescue some ripped out pages of a spell book from the Castle of Tombstowne to enable the completed book of spells to lift the curse from the town. The pages are colourful little blue things that are picked up with a flash when you walk into them. Getting to some of the pages is difficult and this is where the adventuring element comes in and you have to solve various problems.

The rooms are shown in 2D but you can move "into" a doorway by jumping up at it, taking you into another room at right angles. Connections are also made just by walking off the edge of a screen or by jumping up staircases to a different level. Each location will contain furniture, ghostly enemies or objects which may be jumped on, avoided and picked up respectively.

SECOND OPINION

Loved the graphics – shame about the overlap. The tune was terrific and the game as a whole stands up well to the arcade adventure opposition. That means that the puzzles are far from easy and that there's a lengthy game to be played here.

PC

The ghosts mostly move in regular movement patterns so that timing is required to avoid them. Some however home in on you and push you off screen unless you're carrying the right object and perform the right action. Ghosts will drain your energy, which is indicated at the top of the screen by a sparkler that slowly burns down. This is also depleted just by moving around so that replenishment is needed.

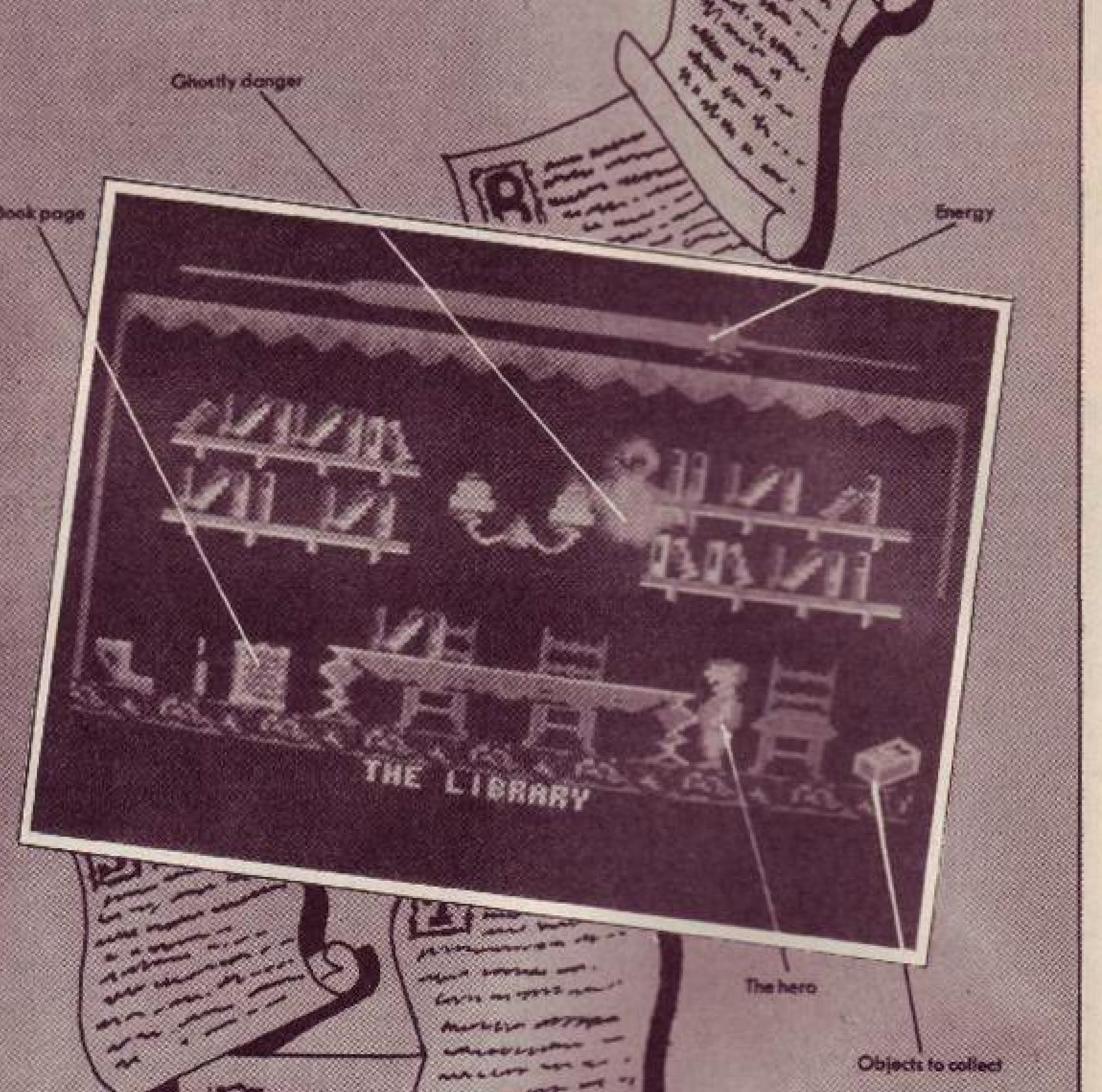
Extra energy takes the form of sticks of dynamite which automatically increase your supply when picked up. All the other objects found lying about the place may have a use and you'll have to find out what it is. Most problems have to be approached logically as always but sometimes it is difficult to recognise exactly what you're carrying until you find out what it's for. One example is in fixing a broken staircase with a stretch of stairway that isn't initially apparent as being such.

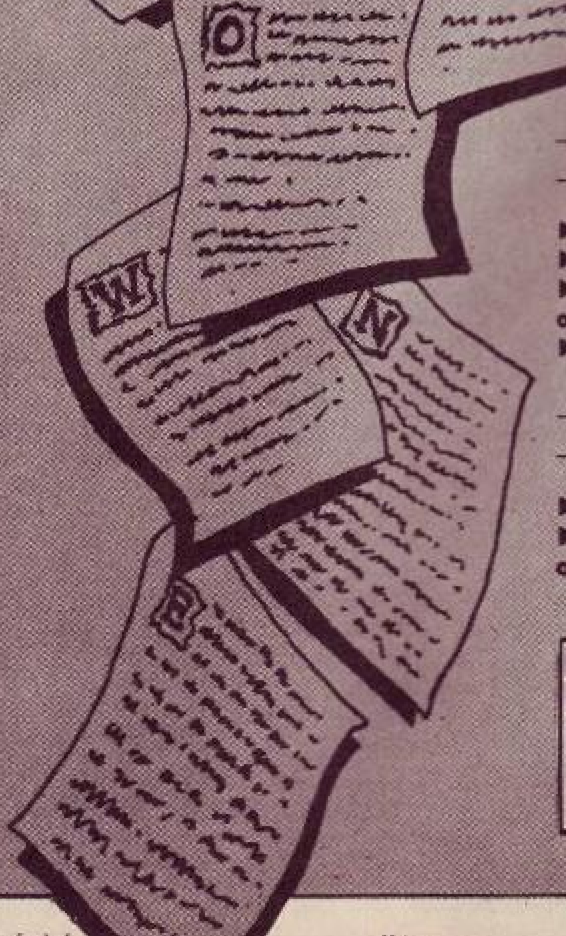
Only four objects at a time can be carried so there will probably be a lot of switching around and running about as you try to find the right thing to complete a task. At the end of the game you're told how many pages of the book you collected and how much of the game you've explored.

The graphics are very impressive with colourful and detailed room design but the problem comes when characters overlap, as they do frequently, at which point a really nasty colour clash occurs. The music is the other great thing about the game and it's worth staying on the title screen for a while just to listen to it since it uses Arnold's musical capability well. The puzzles may take some cracking but provide a decent challenge in what is a good package.

BW







G O O D   N E W S

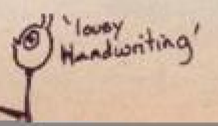
- **Excellent music.**
- **Colourful and detailed screens.**
- **Difficult puzzling element with objects.**
- **A large playing area to try to discover.**

B A D   N E W S

- **Horrible when graphics overlap.**
- **Sometimes hard to know what an object is and therefore what it might do.**

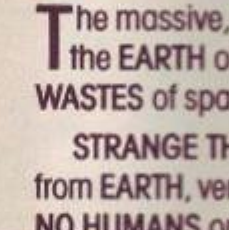
GRAPHICS	62%
SONICS	76%
GRAB FACTOR	74%
STAYING POWER	71%
A A RATING	72%

 Cider – fuel of the future





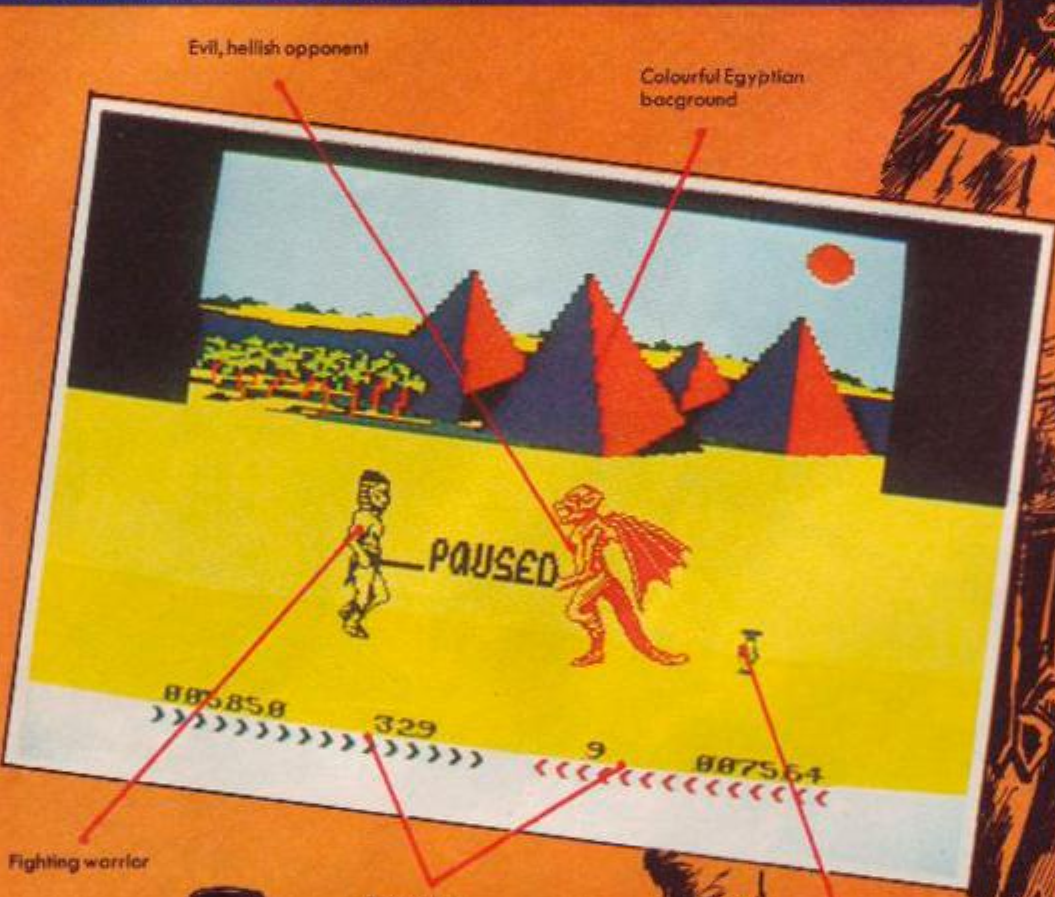
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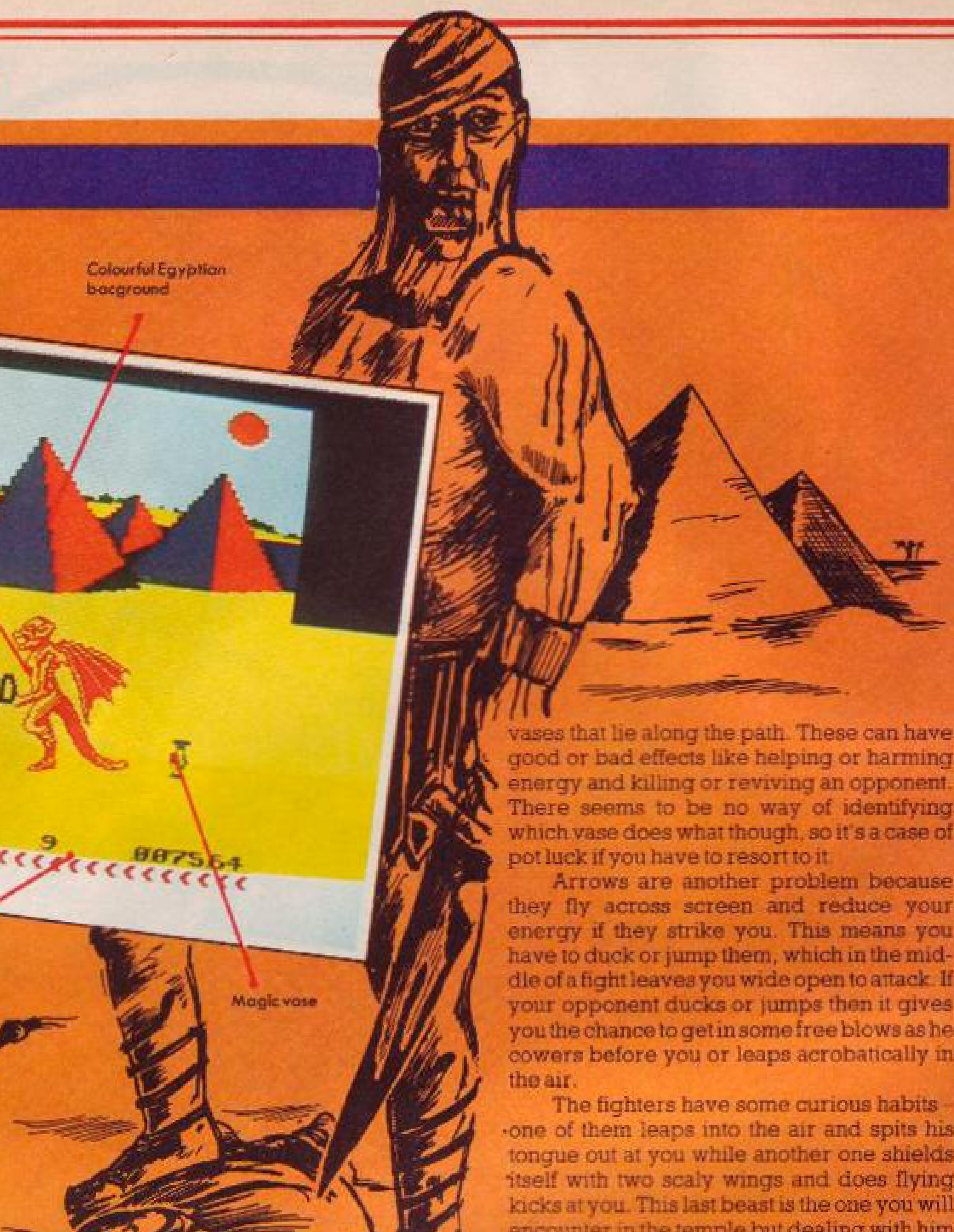


SORCERY

FIGHTING WARRIOR

Melbourne House, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys





If you thought Egypt was all about romantic boat rides down the Nile, bathing in ass's milk and flirting with Cleopatra then think again, because here it's all about blood, guts and hacking people up with a sword. It's all in the name of rescuing a beautiful princess but don't let sentimentality like that get in your way.

You control Fighting Warrior, the champion of Egypt, who has to battle past a whole series of devilish opponents in order to reach a temple in which the princess is imprisoned. Most of the action takes place against a scrolling backdrop as you walk towards the temple. The scenery and enemies that come to fight you are colourful and very detailed but the fighting is the real nitty-gritty.

SECOND OPINION

The violence in this game fair made my stomach churn – which is not to say that I didn't enjoy it. It's very exciting to begin with as you hack, chop and thrust at the vicious foes. The accompanying sounds of flesh being rent are truly disgusting. But as you progress – or not – it gets rather dull. When, you begin to wonder, am I going to get near my goal? Well, don't ask me, because however much I persevered I didn't seem to get any nearer to saving my beloved.

PC

There are several different kinds of opponent but all have the same sort of characteristics, except for the vicious demon. The others all wield swords like yourself with which they can indulge in an orgy of hacking at your body. Fighting warrior of course returns the compliment and it becomes a battle of stamina and wits to see who lasts longest.

There are three basic sword strikes: up, mid and low. There are also two avoidance moves of jumping or ducking but these aren't very useful in fights. Two energy bars count down with each succesful strike and the first one to run out keels over and expires. Each strike also results in a satisfying thwack and a spattering of pixels on your opponent. The violence of hammering your sword across the enemy's head may not be wholesome, but if you're in the right mood it can be terribly satisfying.

As a fighter nears death he starts to flash different colours and all hope is lost. Defeating an opponent will replenish some of your energy but tough opponents may leave you very weak indeed. In these circumstances you may resort to hitting one of the magic vases that lie along the path. These can have good or bad effects like helping or harming energy and killing or reviving an opponent. There seems to be no way of identifying which vase does what though, so it's a case of pot luck if you have to resort to it.

Arrows are another problem because they fly across screen and reduce your energy if they strike you. This means you have to duck or jump them, which in the middle of a fight leaves you wide open to attack. If your opponent ducks or jumps then it gives you the chance to get in some free blows as he cowers before you or leaps acrobatically in the air.

The fighters have some curious habits – one of them leaps into the air and spits his tongue out at you while another one shields itself with two scaly wings and does flying kicks at you. This last beast is the one you will encounter in the temple but dealing with him there is a very tall order.

Slicing away with the sword was very enjoyable at first but as you progress to the temple and play more games it tends to get samey. There's certainly plenty of challenge but I didn't find this as fast or addictive as *Fist*. Still a good game though with the graphics and animation being its best point.

BW

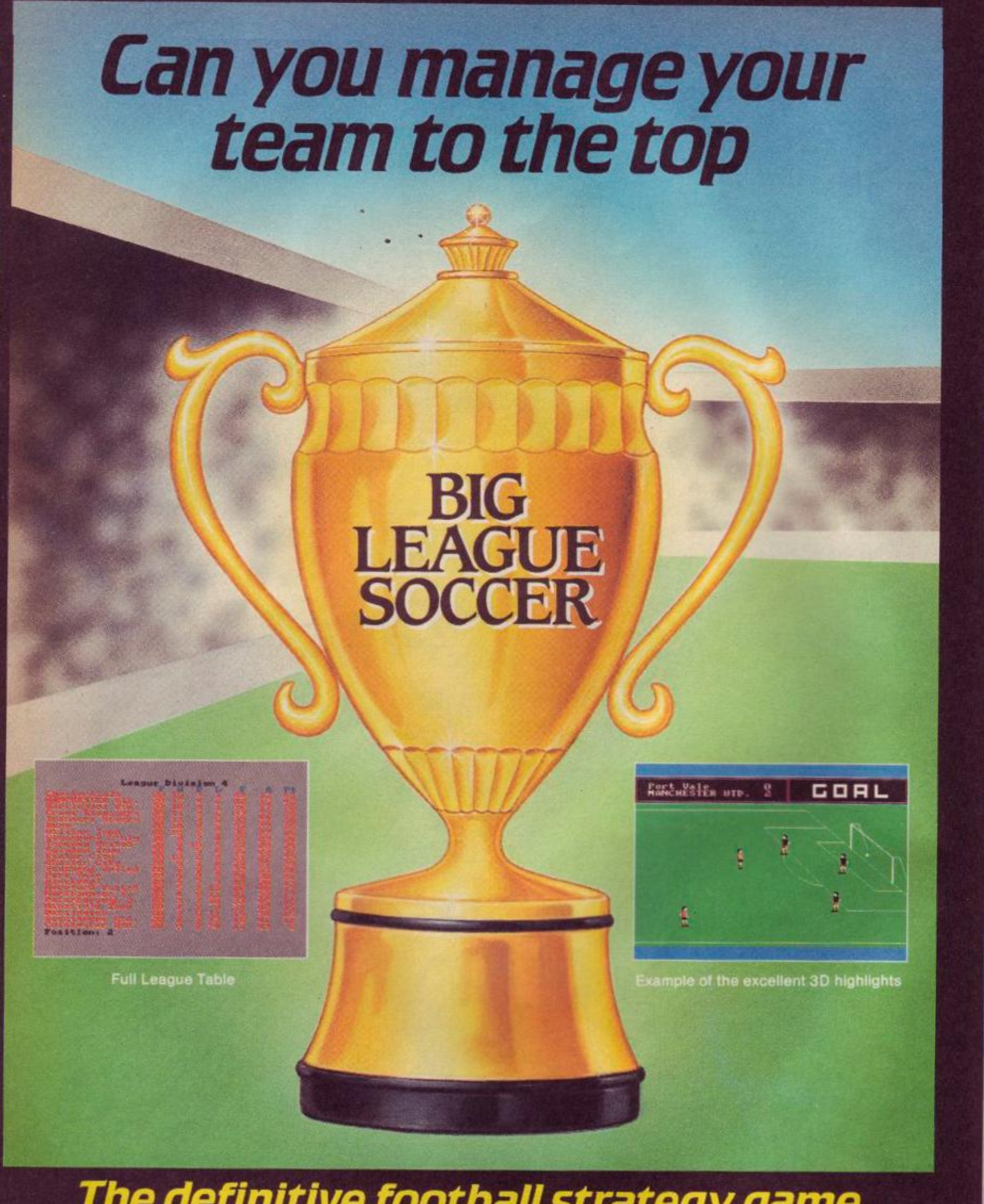
GOOD NEWS

- **Detailed and colourful scrolling backgrounds.**
- **Good animation on characters.**
- **Satisfying level of violence to relieve your frustrations on.**
- **Tough long-term game task.**

BAD NEWS

Little variation in fighting task.
Gameplay seems rather slow.
Vases seem to be just pot luck.

GRAPHICS	87%
SONICS	67%
GRAB FACTOR	76%
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A A RATING	75%



Full League Table

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Thanks for the DK Tronics expans

Will the DK Tronics memory expansions really turn 464s and 664s into 6128s – at a stroke? James Hartley sees what an extra 64K can do for Arnold.

One of the reasons 464 owners cast envious eyes at the 6128 is because of the extra 64K of memory it has tucked away in the cupboard, allowing you to do fancy things like swap screens and store huge amounts of data without getting that infamous 'Out of Memory' message. And if 464 owners are going green, 664 owners must be doing something unmentionable, since they paid the price for all those extra bytes but got nothing for it. Now, in the absence of an official Amstrad upgrade, DKTronics are stepping in to fill the gap...

And fill it very nicely they do too. For a mere £49.95 you get a very attractive little unit that slips into your disc expansion port, looking even more at home there (thanks to excellent design) than Amstrad's own rear-end add-ons. It brings you 64K of RAM which can either be paged in direct from BASIC or controlled via a series of RSX commands (bar commands) loaded in from tape. If you've got a 464/664, it gives you a very large measure of 6128 compatibility (more about this later), and if you're already in the 6128 club, it gives you a bewildering array of memory options. Sounds tempting, eh?

The unit is small and compact and plugs into the disk drive expansion slot. It sits firmly in place (unlike a certain disk-drive interface I could mention) so won't dump your data by wobbling at an inappropriate moment.

Where's the memory?

Powering up the machine, the first thing I did was to check how much memory I had available and – ooops! No difference! What's going on?

Those readers of a technical disposition will already know the answer, but for the benefit of others a brief explanation is in order – anyone in the know can simply skip to the next paragraph. The Z80 in the Amstrad can only talk to 64K of memory at any one time, for the simple reason that the biggest number it can count to is 65535. To get round this, extra memory has to be treated specially and **paged** in. This is done by treating the 64K of main RAM as a series of four 16K blocks. Each block can be switched out and another block of extension RAM (normally hidden behind it) can be switched in. When you switch out a block, the data in it isn't lost – it's just hidden from view. This means that you can fill one block with data, hide it, switch in another block to give yourself more room, and then switch back again.

Sounds dandy, but it isn't quite that simple in practise. First, getting access to the extra memory involves some nifty programming, and second (and most important for most people) you can't use that extra memory to house mega-BASIC programs. So what can you do with it? The good news is that DKTronics supply software with the RAMpack that does all the hard work for you.

The software

The software provides fourteen extra BASIC RSX's, or **bar commands**. These are listed in the table. The program is fully relocatable and not protected, so if you have a disc system you can make a disc back-up by following the instructions in the manual. It should be noted at this point that the quality of the manual is superb – it offers numerous demo programs and explains the functioning and potential of the unit in very easily understood terms. Even if you don't know a byte from a biscuit, you should have no trouble in using the RAMpack if you check out the book of words first.

Windows

One very desirable feature of the DKTronics interface, which really gives it the edge over the BANKMAN software supplied with the 6128, is its ability to save and restore windows using the |SAVEW and |LOADW commands. This means you can get real pop-down menus in your BASIC programs.

The trouble with using windows on the Amstrad (and on any but the most advanced systems) is that when you define and write to a window all the material underneath it is overwritten and destroyed. However, the DK Tronics software allows you to define windows as normal in BASIC and then save their contents in the extra RAM. You can then overwrite them as many times as you wish, and when necessary restore the original contents and carry on from where you left off.

It is of course possible to do this using the BANKMAN software supplied with the 6128, but you'd have to be very clever. The DK Tronics software makes it a piece of cake. Using the |SAVEW facility transforms windowing from being a useful extra to a powerful programming tool with little extra effort involved.

What do you do with it?

There are three basic ways of using the extra memory to store data. The first is to use it simply as a means of saving screens, either text or graphic, which you want to be able to reload into the display area later. Normally the only way to do this if you had, for example, a pretty picture on the monitor, would be to save it to disc or – worse – tape. However, if you've installed the DKTronics RSX software all you have to do is type |SAVES,n where n is the number of one of the blocks of extra RAM. As mentioned above, RAM is arranged in 16K chunks, so that means you have 4 16K blocks waiting to be used in your little box at the back of the machine. Since a screen is made up of exactly 16K of data, you can save 4 screens in the add-on RAM and then flip between them at your leisure. You can recall a saved screen by entering |LOADS,n where n has the same significance as it did before, and hey presto, there's your old display back again.

Next, there are the |LOADD and |SAVED commands, which operate rather like the SAVE "filename",B command in BASIC. These commands take three parameters with an optional fourth



the Memory



(see the table) and might be rather difficult for a BASIC programmer to come to terms with if it weren't for the excellent manual. There are clearly written sections explaining how arrays and strings are stored in BASIC and how you can transfer them to and from your add-on RAM. This information is invaluable and really makes effective use of the extra memory feasible for BASIC-only programmers. For example, if you DIMension a large array in BASIC, you eat up a lot of memory and risk running out of space. With the extra RAM you can hide it away until you need it, leaving more space for your main program.

6128 Emulator?

Finally, there's the very intriguing |EMULATE command, which configures your 464/664 to behave like a 6128. This means you can use software packages, such as the enhanced version of Campbell Systems' *Masterfile* or *Tasword 6128* on a smaller machine and get all the benefits of the extra space and flexibility. For this reason alone the extra memory is worth considering.

You need to be careful here, however, since compatibility with 6128-specific software is obviously not guaranteed – though I did have no trouble running CP/M Plus and other 6128 utilities on my 464 with the RAMpack fitted.

However, it's debatable how useful the 6128 compatibility actually is. Most software houses make sure that their Amstrad software will run on all Amstrad machines, for obvious reasons, and I think that a number of 6128 owners will agree with me when I say that so far I have found little practical use for the extra memory on the larger machine – at least where running applications software is concerned (with the notable exceptions of the two programs mentioned above).

CP/M Plus

There is of course CP/M Plus, the operating system from Digital Research that makes the 6128 such a powerful 'serious' computer. Buy a 6128 – or a PCW8256 – and you get it free with the machine. But the snag is that, if you have a 464/664, how are you going to get your mitts on a copy of it? It may come free with the 6128, but just you try going out and buying a copy for your 464/664. Both you and your wallet will be in for a nasty shock.

DK Tronics have been in negotiation with Digital Research about the possibility of offering CP/M Plus with the memory expansions. But at the moment it seems unlikely that a deal will be struck.

This leaves 464/664 owners who wish to run programs using CP/M Plus – such as *Wordstar* or *Supercalc 2* – two alternatives, both of which are unpleasant. They can try and find someone with CP/M Plus – e.g. a 6128 owner – and copy the disc: this is not only awkward, but downright illegal. Or, they can buy a copy of CP/M Plus – which will probably be so expensive that they might as well have gone out and bought a 6128 in the first place.

Summary

If you do a lot of programming that requires extra storage space, or you like the ideas of pop-down menus (see the box elsewhere in this article) or animated screens (created by |SWAPping rapidly from one to another), then this peripheral stands head and shoulders above the rest. On the other hand, if you're a 464 owner in need of extra memory, you might consider selling your machine and getting the standard 6128. You'll pay more, of course, but for some people the cast-iron guarantee of total compatibility may be worth it.

664 owners could be forgiven for feeling differently. Their resentment at the sight of the 6128 might well drive them to get this package instead – particularly since the low second-hand value of the machine makes trading up to the 6128 less desirable. This unit could go some way to answering the prayers of some very angry customers!

Command Controls

The extra commands provided by the DKTronics software are as follows (optional parameters in brackets):

|SAVES,bank no (,swap)
|LOADS,bank no (,swap)
Saves and restores a screen. The (,swap) parameter – 0 or 1 – enables alternate screen storage space to be swapped in or out, speeding up the process of toggling between different displays.

|SAVEW,window no,bank no (,bank address)
|LOADW,window no,bank no (,bank address)
Saves and restores the specified window in the specified bank. The optional address dictates where in the bank the data should be stored.

|SAVED,bank no,start location,length (,bank address)
|LOADD,bank no,start location,length (,bank address)
Transfers data to and from different areas of standard and add-on memory. The bank address parameter is used as in |SAVEW above.

|LOW, |HIGH, |SWAP
Three commands that enable rapid changing of the display by first loading screen data into an area of memory and then displaying that area on the screen. Enables animation effects to be achieved without screen flicker problems.

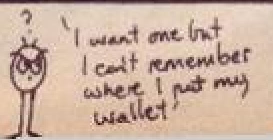
|POKE,bank,bank address,value
|PEEK,bank,bank address,variable address

|POKE pokes a value into an area of expansion of RAM,
|PEEK fetches a value and stores it a named variable.

|BANK,bank no
Maps a given bank of add-on RAM into the address space at 16K to 32K.

|ASKRAM,enquiry code,variable
Enables the user to test the add-on RAM status. An enquiry code of 1 returns the amount of RAM in the named variable; 2 returns the number of banks; 3 returns 0 if RAM pack fitted and functioning correctly, 1 if not present or faulty.

ons



LORD OF THE RINGS

30 copies of the Melbourne House mega-adventure must be won in this Christmas cracker of a comp

It's not every day you get the chance to assume the role of a cute little Hobbit. You had it in *The Hobbit*, and you can have it again now – only bigger and better – in *Lord of the Rings*.

Tolkien's massive fantasy of the clash between the forces of good and evil has at last reached the micro. Two tapes and the first volume of the book – The Fellowship of the Ring – will set you back £15.95 in the shops.

This is your chance to become Bilbo Baggins for free.

We're going to ask you a few simple questions. If you get them right you will have a chance of winning one of these highly desirable prizes. Get them wrong and you might just wake up one morning to find youself changed into a reptile. The choice is yours.

1 Who lived at Isengard?
a. Saruman
b. Tolkien
c. Gandalf

2 Where did Bilbo live at he beginning of the book?
a. Big End
b. Bag End
c. Beg End

3 Who is the evil genius behind the whole business?
a. Gollum
b. Moriarty
c. Sauron

Mastertronic magnanimity!

In a gesture of monstrous munificence the mighty masters of the budget game, Messrs. Mastertronic – producers of those AA Raves *Nonterraqueous and Soul of a Robot* – are offering 25 Amstrad Action readers the chance to win not just a copy of the merry funny micro guide *Micromania*, by Messrs. Charles Platt and David Langford, but also vouchers to the value of £4.00 – redeemable at Boots for the software of your choice.

By my feeble reckoning, this means you could purchase TWO Mastertronic games and still have 2p change. What you'd do with it I can't imagine, but it sounds like a pretty good deal.

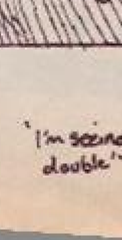
All you have to do is SPOT THE DIFFERENCE between pictures 1 and 2 below, in which two evil pirates are caught in the act of trying to make off with some of Mastertronic's latest software.

Put a circle round each difference you spot on picture 2, and write below it the total number of differences there are. Then cut out the picture and send it to *Mastertronic Competition at Amstrad Action. The closing date is January 13th.*

1



2



COMPETITION

CAULDRON spellbinding split contest

50 copies of the mystic game to be won. OR – a chance to capture a fabulous *Cauldron* trophy.

ompetition Entries

ll three competitions have the ame closing date – January 3th. Put your entries on a postcard or the back of an envelope only. If you want to enter more than one competition, you must send separate entries and mark them clearly. The address for all three competitions is **Amstrad Action, Valeside, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PS**



You don't have to be schizoid to enter the great competition we've cooked up in our cauldron with the warlocks at Palace Software. But – you guessed – it might just help.

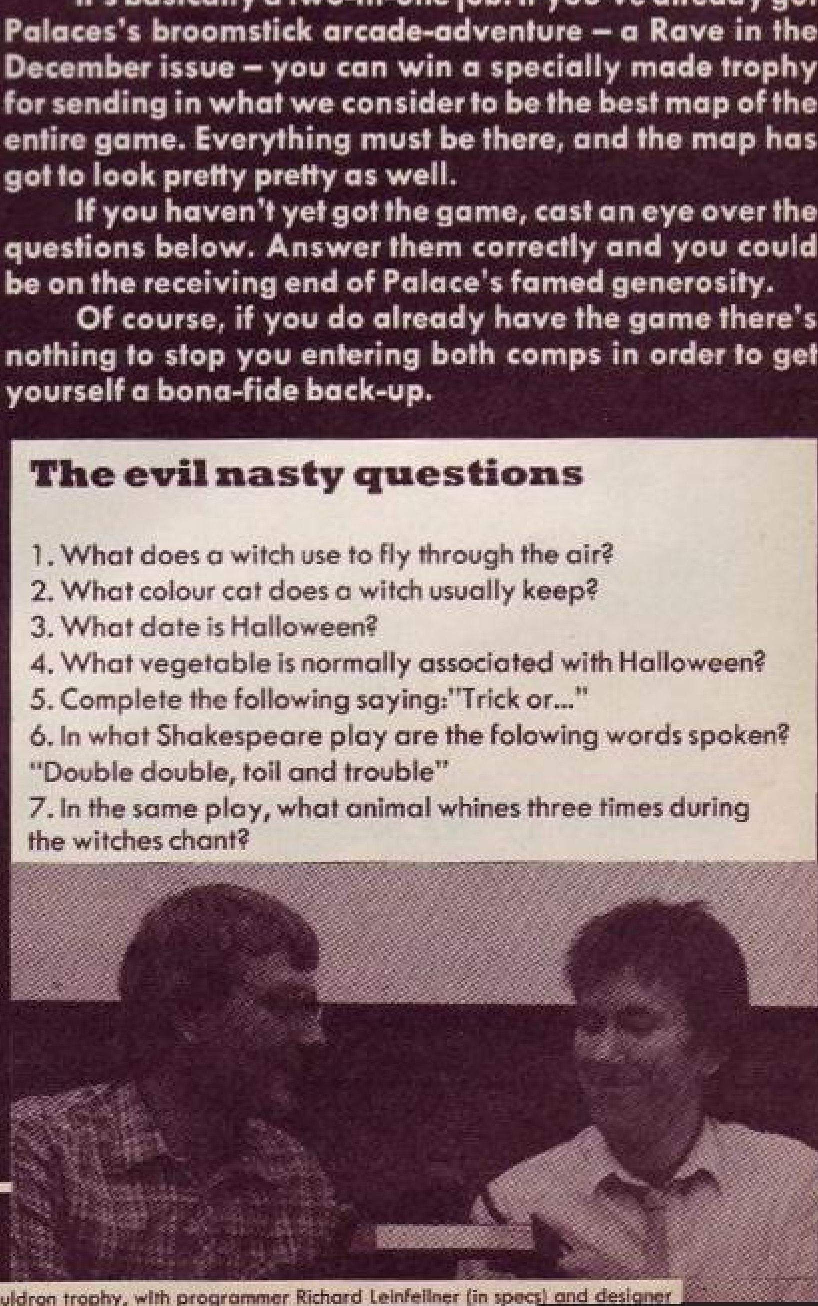
It's basically a two-in-one job. If you've already got Palaces's broomstick arcade-adventure – a Rave in the December issue – you can win a specially made trophy for sending in what we consider to be the best map of the entire game. Everything must be there, and the map has got to look pretty pretty as well.

If you haven't yet got the game, cast an eye over the questions below. Answer them correctly and you could be on the receiving end of Palace's famed generosity.

Of course, if you do already have the game there's nothing to stop you entering both comps in order to get yourself a bona-fide back-up.

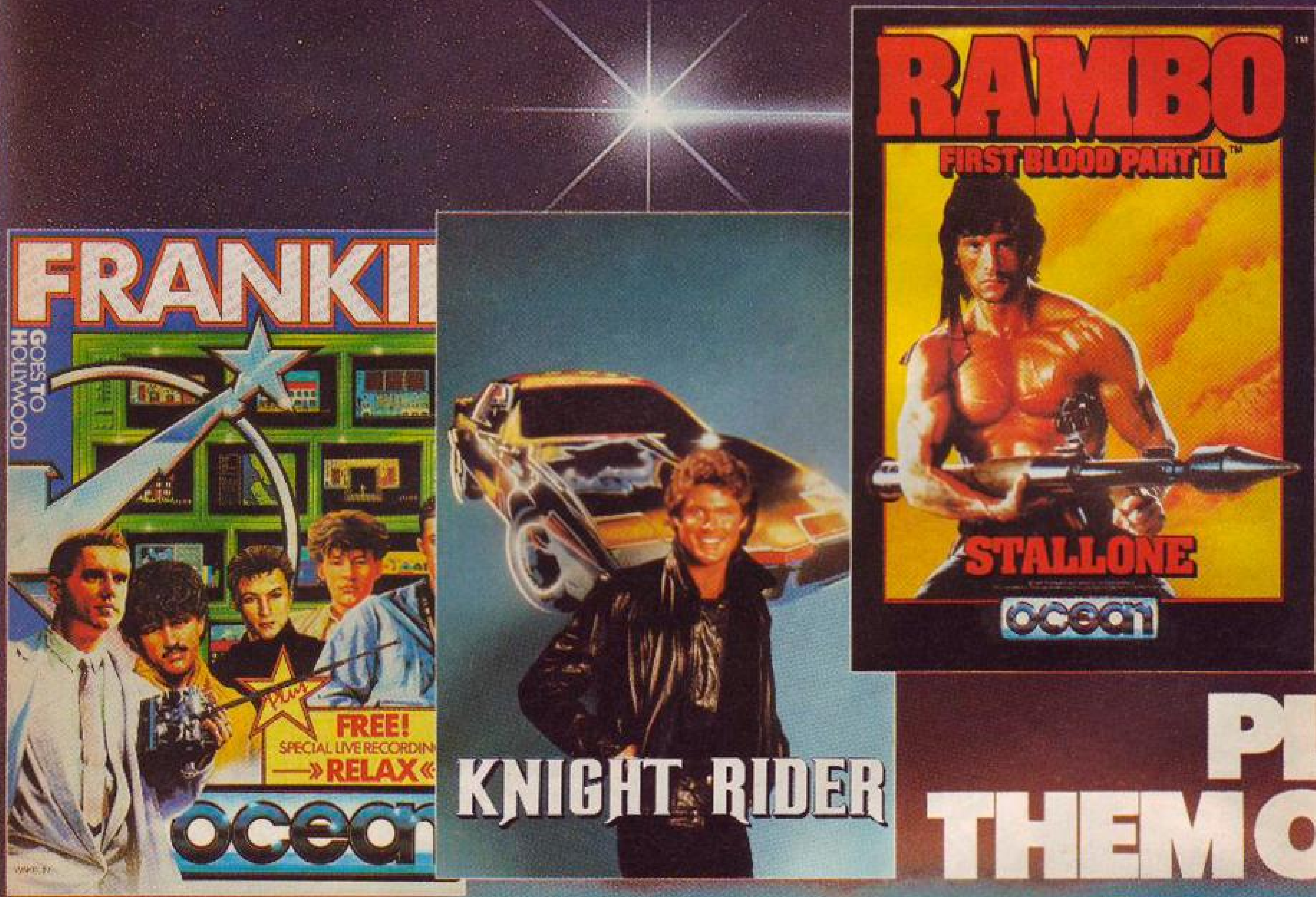
The evil nasty questions

1. What does a witch use to fly through the air?
2. What colour cat does a witch usually keep?
3. What date is Halloween?
4. What vegetable is normally associated with Halloween?
5. Complete the following saying:"Trick or..."
6. In what Shakespeare play are the folowing words spoken? "Double double, toil and trouble"
7. In the same play, what animal whines three times during the witches chant?



The fabulous Cauldron trophy, with programmer Richard Leinfellner (in specs) and designer

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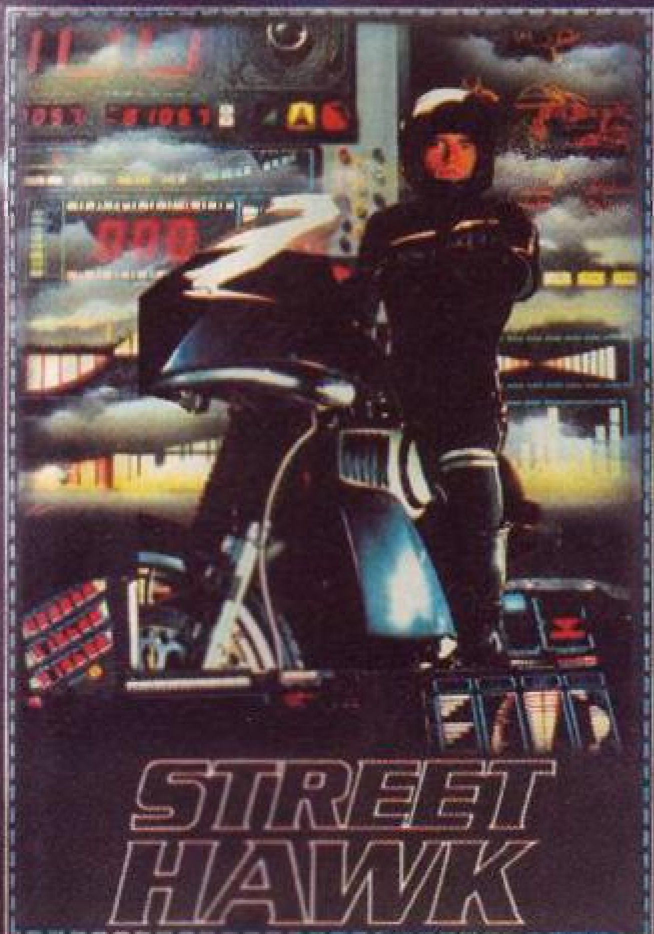
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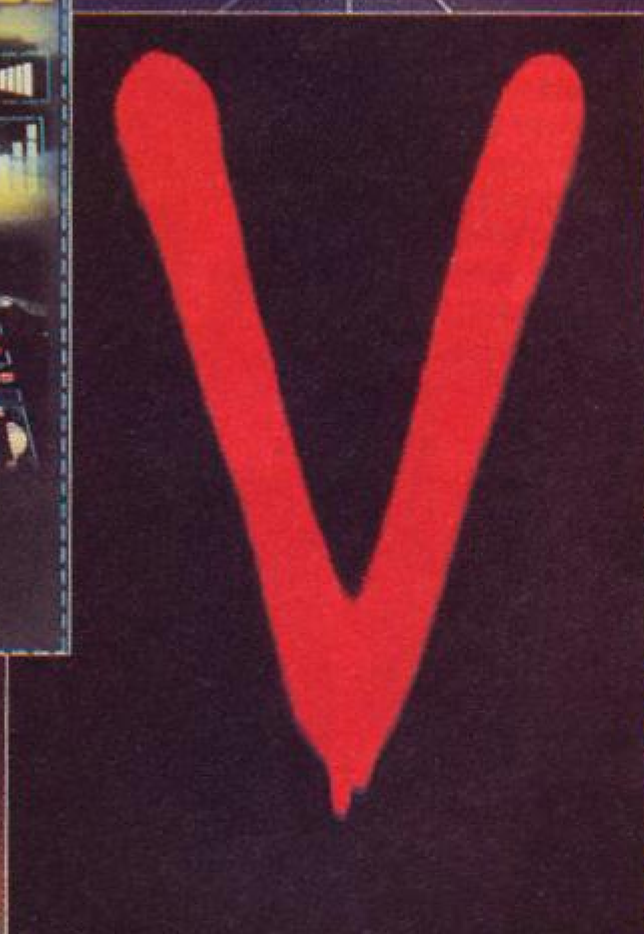
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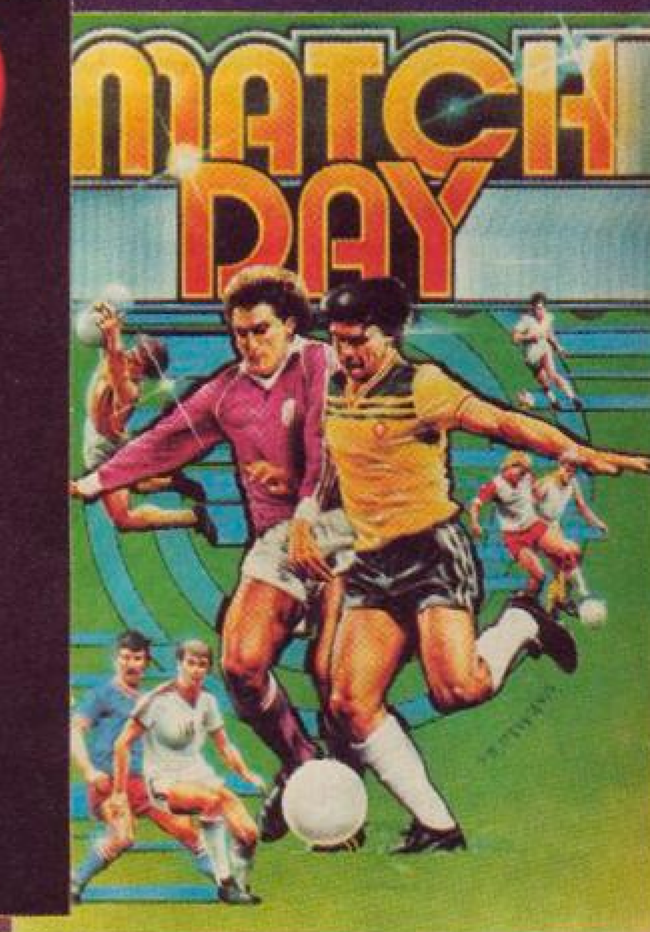
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ADVENTURE

Welcome once again, fellow travellers! This month the Pilgrim pays homage to The Never Ending Story, is stricken by the Curse of the Seven Faces, and has a ball with a magician! Furthermore, the Cowled Crusader offers you the chance to win the game of your choice as he launches the world's first Readers' Adventure Chart. Plus news, hot reviews, and timely tips gathered for you by the follower of the Strait and Narrow Path! What more can you want, except to read on and find salvation!!

THE NEVER ENDING STORY

Ocean, £9.95 cass

Just imagine it... There you are, sitting in your dusty attic, playing with your Arnold, when you discover a program all about a boy (or girl) sitting in an attic, who discovers a program all about a boy (or girl) sitting in an attic, who discovers a program...

If all this sounds familiar, then you've probably either seen the film 'The Never-Ending Story', or read the book. It can now be RAMmed into your Arnold, thanks to Ocean who seem to making a habit of churning out games based on big-name marketing.

The never-ending plot goes something like this – anti-social Bastian Balthazar Bux climbs into an attic with a dusty old book he's found at the local rag shop and starts reading up on a planet called Fantasia. The author of this tome has such a gripping style that Bastian soon finds himself literally whisked away into another dimension, where he must save Fantasia from nothing at all.

From what??! Yes, fellow Pilgrims, this is a never-ending story about absolutely nothing – in this case about the 'All-consuming Nothing' that is busy swallowing up Fantasia and from which only Bastian BB can save the world. Unfortunately, he's sitting in his attic, and it's up to a young Fantasian boy, Atreyu, to find him and put him on the job.

That's where you come in. You take the part of Atreyu and must get hold of BBB. It's a very enjoyable task – the game has some truly excellent graphics, making clever use of the Mode 1 colours but at the same time designed to give an appearance of reasonable hi-res. The graphics are very well-presented, using a colourful backdrop of sunset-tinted landscape across the top of the screen. Various different overlays are then printed against the background, showing characters you meet, objects you collect, and other views of interest.

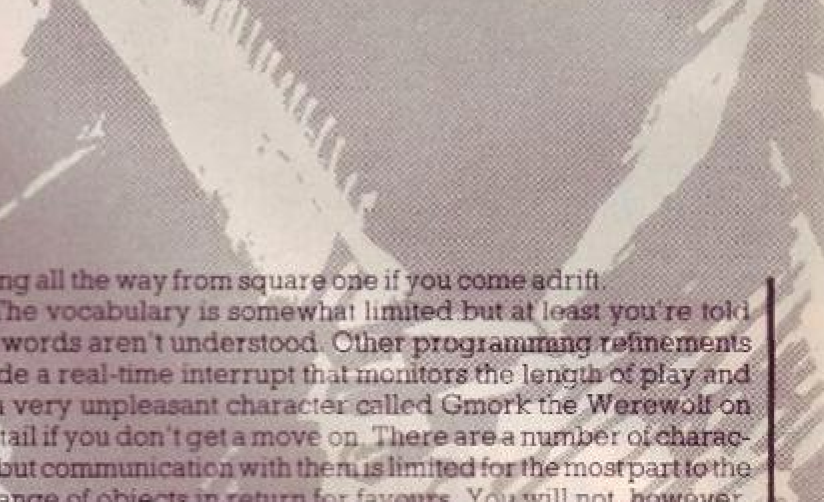
The character set has also been re-designed and is not only attractive but quite readable – a blessing after struggling with *Souls of Darkon* last month which was almost illegible on a colour screen.

The game loads in four main data blocks, an intro followed by three plot sections. These have to be tackled in the right order, and although it would obviously be impossible to fit everything in at once, it's still a bit of a drag waiting for them to load. It's definitely worth saving the game frequently, otherwise you can find yourself starting all the way from square one if you come adrift.

The vocabulary is somewhat limited but at least you're told what words aren't understood. Other programming refinements include a real-time interrupt that monitors the length of play and sets a very unpleasant character called Gmork the Werewolf on your tail if you don't get a move on. There are a number of characters, but communication with them is limited for the most part to the exchange of objects in return for favours. You will not, however, be able to crack the game without their assistance.

The only real omission is of an 'Examine' option, which is a pity because there is often the desire – and sometimes a real need – to take a close look at things you find or people you meet.

The plot starts off fairly tame – you shouldn't have any trouble cracking the first section, where you need to enlist the help of Falkor the Luckdragon to fly you over a vast expanse of desert. The second and last sections are, however, far more difficult and



The Never Ending story – Why's he reading the book? He should be playing the game!

you will need to make frequent recourse to the SAVE command if you're not to come unstuck here.

The Never-Ending Story is superbly designed and the limited vocabulary will make it particularly attractive to younger players, while the size of the game may attract a few more experienced Pilgrims. I've only got one question – why does the graphic of Bastian show him reading a BOOK in his attic? Surely he ought to be tapping away at an Arnold!

Seas of Blood

Adventure International, £9.95 cass

There must be quite a few adventurers who have waited impatiently for this game. It certainly boasts a terrific pedigree – written by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingston of 'Fighting Fantasy' fame and programmed by the *Gremlins* team at Adventure International, it promises quite a few surprises.

You may recall, however, that the Pilg wasn't entirely complimentary about *Robin of Sherwood* – a potentially excellent game that was slightly marred by the way the program responded to your inputs. Well, *Seas of Blood* is rather similar in some ways – it could have been an all-time best, but – although it's still pretty hot – it doesn't, in the Pilg's opinion, quite make the 'Classic' league.



The plot is pretty simple. As a big, bad Pirate you must sail the Inland Sea in your trusty vessel, the Banshee, seeking out treasure and sending anyone who comes in your way to Davey Jones Locker.

As usual, the graphics are excellent. The blurb boasts 300 locations with a picture for each one, but as is often the case a large number of these locations are simply variations on a theme – in this case variations on the remarkably uninteresting expanse of ocean over which you are sailing. However, when you encounter another vessel you do get a very impressive view, and the representations of the various ports and other land-based locations are equally impressive.

The main interest in the game is the combat routines. The Fighting Fantasy books were particularly noticeable for their use of dice to determine the outcome of a fight, and this technique has been particularly well adapted to the game. Whenever you attack someone, or they attack you – which in this X certificate adventure happens about every other move – the text display clears and two sets of dice appear. One represents your destiny, the other that of your opponent.

First, your opponent's dice begin to spin frantically. When they come to rest, a value is printed which you must either match or beat. To do this, you keep a close eye on your own dice, which are now spinning, and hit a key to stop them wshen you think they've come up with a winning throw. In fact, the outcome is largely one of luck since they spin so fast it's really impossible to stop them at the right moment.

Winning battles increases your experience but at the same time may, if you're unlucky and get wounded, decrease your strength. These factors are crucial in the game since your strength is added to your dice throws (as is your enemy's) and it is essential to keep it as high as possible to be sure of winning. Predictably, your opponents tend to get tougher as the game progresses.

As far as inputs and vocabulary are concerned, this game suffers from similar drawbacks to its predecessor, *Robin of Sherwood*. Apart from simply ignoring anything it doesn't understand, it also has a very annoying habit of assuming that any word following an 'Examine' command is a valid one. For example, if you enter 'Examine starue' by mistake, instead of 'Examine statue', the program will reply 'You see nothing special'. This can be highly misleading, as there IS something special about the statue and you'll be losing out if you don't find out what it is.

The combat routines, however, make *Seas of Blood* a very enjoyable game, even if it can be tiresome at times. It's not very easy to map – the Pilgrim advises you to keep close to follow the shoreline to begin with so that you can map the inland sea more easily. Other than that, your best bet is a sharp sword, a quick eye, and a blue beard. UP and at 'em, me hearties!

THE MAGICIAN'S BALL

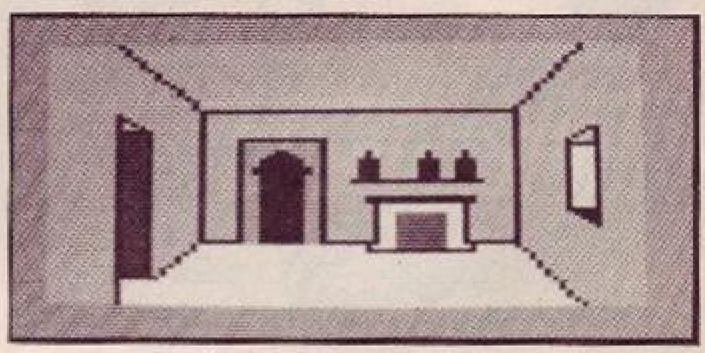
Global, £7.95 cass

Here's a new game from a new company that promises to be something quite special. The plot isn't startlingly original – go forth and free a damsel in distress from the grip of an evil wizard's spell – but the program itself is excellently put together and offers all the features us Pilgrims crave but rarely receive.

First, you get some very attractive pics. They may be small, but they're perfectly formed. There's a different picture for each location, and the Pilg reckons that size comes second to quality where graphics are concerned.

Second, just to give the atmosphere a boost, you get an astonishing computer rendering of Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells. If any of you out there ever saw *Castle of Terror* or *The Disc Hobbit* running on a Commodore 64, you'll know how effective music can be in adventure, especially when the melody changes as you move from location to location. *Magician's Ball* is, to my knowledge, the first game to do this on Arnold.

Third, you get real interactive characters. By that I mean characters who will accept commands as if they were directly



Close up of one of the pics in The Magician's Ball

under your control. So you can make them get, drop, give, and go to your heart's content – provided of course that they're prepared to obey. The characters have a significant role in the game and some of them are quite endearing – a little dragon, for example, who proves a very faithful if somewhat useless companion.

You can also, rather as in *Lords of Midnight*, change the character that you control directly. There are two main people in the game, Caro (who must break the spell) and Azul, who must help him. If Caro gets in a tight spot, you can type Azul and lo and

behold, you've swapped identities, locations, inventories, and all.

Magician's Ball is an excellent game – the Cowled Crusader's only reservation was that perhaps there wasn't quite enough of it, but that doesn't necessarily mean you'll finish it in a hurry. Add it to your collection, and keep an eye on this column for news of *Old Scores* – the next Global release that looks just as good.



ICE STATION ZERO

Eighth Day, £2.50 cass

This is one of a batch of cheap label games from Eighth Day Software. They've been around for some time but have only just been converted for pilgrims paying homage to St. Arnold.

They're cheap, they're *Quilled*, they don't have an enormous amount in them, but some of them are nevertheless extremely tricky. *Ice Station Zero*, for example, puts you right up against it from the word go by whisking you across the frozen arctic wastes, hotly pursued by a pack of hungry wolves.

It's slightly typical of the Eighth Day Games that the only way you can escape from the wolves is by using an object that is extremely difficult to find. The Pilg thinks this isn't quite fair, since this secret weapon is concealed in another object which, if you 'Examine' it, is described as 'Nothing Special'. The answer is that you have to 'Search' it, but the Cowled Crusader reckons this to be slightly misleading, and not the sort of word-play that naturally springs to the fingers when pursued by wolves.

Once you've escaped the wolves, it's a rather traditional affair of stopping a mad scientist from blowing up the world. There are currently two other games in the series, one of which is slightly surreal in tone – *Faerie* – and the other – *Quann Tulla* – falling into the intergalactic conflict category.

One unusual touch is that each game has, on one side of the tape, a tutorial for novice players as well as a short promotional blurb about the other games in the series.

These games are certainly cheap at £2.50, but they're pre-*Illustrator* efforts (i.e. there are no graphics) and I can't help feeling that I'd rather save my cash towards something more substantial. They used to cost only £1.99 when they first appeared on the Spectrum, which was a bit more reasonable.

	Atmosphere	Interaction	Challenge	AA-Rating
Seas of Blood	83%	62%	78%	78%
Never Ending Story	85%	65%	78%	82%
Magician's Ball	85%	82%	65%	80%
Ice Station Zero	52%	50%	48%	49%



The pilgrim hereby declares that each month, in this holy space, he shall display a **Chart**, which shall for the benefit of all who pass this way, display the titles of the Most Popular Adventures. These games shall be chosen by members of the Pilgrim's Band, followers of St. Arnold, adventurers tried and true, who know what they like and are not afraid to speak out!

To make your opinions known, and to see which games are really making the grade where it counts – on YOUR Arnolds – grab a pen, fill in the form, and post it without delay to Amstrad Action, for the attention of the Cowled Crusader.

Each month, we shall draw from a hat a form sent in by a lucky Pilgrim who shall then receive a copy of the game of his choice! So don't just polish your sword, but sharpen your quill and get scratching

To The Pilgrim.

My favourite three adventures are:

1. Game: ____________ Company: ____________
2. Game: ____________ Company: ____________
3. Game: ____________ Company: ____________

My reasons for putting game number one above as first choice are:

If I'm a lucky Pilgrim and win a free game, I should like to receive a copy of:

My address is (BLOCK CAPITALS ONLY):

PILGRIM'S POST

I just can't resist mentioning Paul and Clare Wilkins of Bristol again this month. 'At last! A magazine has got a genuine adventure series. We aim to follow the Pilgrim everywhere!'. Wilkinses – I can only congratulate you on your obvious taste and discrimination. Any letter that starts like that, and by the third paragraph has got round to calling me 'O Great One', is bound to get an answer on these hallowed pages. If only other readers would follow your shining example!

Paul and Clare provide further evidence of their outstanding judgement by praising *Heroes of Karn* – definitely one of the better Amstrad adventures – and complimenting Interceptor on the 'devious plot' of *Warlord*. The Pilg reviewed this game a couple of issues back, and has been playing it on and off since then. Interceptor occasionally – in my opinion – put a little too much effort into the pics and a little too little into the prose, but *Warlord* is one of their best yet, no doubt about it.

For the benefit of Paul and Clare, and anyone else having trouble with *Warlord*, I've included some tips for it in this month's clue pot. These come to you courtesy of Chris Plant from Stafford. Chris had never tackled an adventure before *Warlord*. 'I am sure', he says, 'that anyone who has completed a first adventure will appreciate the success I felt on seeing my first 100% score.'

'Although I am a complete novice when it comes to adventure games, and other things according to my wife (although we do have two children) I should be happy to help anyone with this particular adventure!'. Bravely spoken, Chris, and the truth of the matter is that we're all novices when it comes to adventures – one of the joys of playing them is that you never know what's going to happen next.

However, Chris is only one of several 'novice' players who have written in this month. Many of them have asked me to follow up the suggestion made by Derek Makeson in Pilgrim No 2 – that I should print 'retrospective reviews' of games worth buying. From now on therefore, we'll make regular mention of some of these 'older' games, although truth to tell there aren't very many that have made it onto Arnold, being something of a newcomer to the micro market. Also, since it's Christmas and some of you may beentering the world of adventure for the first time, I've added a brief section to this month's column, giving some general advice to 'novice' players.

One 'old' game that the Pilgrim has reviewed (in Pilgrim 1) is Wintersoft's *Ring Of Darkness*. 'One of the best adventure games on the market today', enthuse P and J Pancott of Weymouth. Joan then goes on to provide us all with a very detailed map of the game and some playing hints, a couple of which I have included in the Clue Pot. I've also taken the unusual step of printing a copy of the map. I'm not normally in favour of printing entire maps of adventures, but in the case of *Ring of Darkness*, I feel justified in doing so because the nature of the game is somewhat different from yer-ordinary-adventure. Because there are no 'location descriptions' as such in this game, seeing where everything is doesn't spoil it – and I think many readers will be pleasantly suprised to see exactly how BIG the game is.

Finally, a long and lively letter from James Adamson of Winterton gave the Pilgrim some food for thought, as well as some useful clues...

'I have completed and would be pleased to give advice to fellow adventurers on the following games: *The Hobbit, Emerald Isle, Return to Eden, Classic Adventure, Fantasia Diamond*.

I cannot say what significance the statue in *Fantasia Diamond* has, though suffice it to say that I scored 400 out of 400 without using it. The statues in both *Return to Eden* and *Emerald Isle* DO have a use, however. As a starter, try dropping the koala when at the statue in *Return to Eden* – it will uncover a useful note.

A great thing to do in *Emerald Isle* is type in XYZZY – it doesn't get you anywhere, but it's funny all the same! One thing, though – how come my copy of *Emerald Isle* cost £9.95 when it should be £6.95? (Hmmm. Level 9 should be told of this – any one else had this problem? Pilg.)

Must dash now and pick up my sword (short and strong) for the goblins are pounding on my round green door... Stand aside, Elrond, I can handle this one......

Tally ho, James! And to all who've been in touch a big thank-you, a sharp sword, and a long, safe journey until next month.

Dear Pilgrim

Clue Sniffing With the Pilgrim

Mmmmm! We tackle some very sticky situations in this month's Clue Pot. Matthew Fawbert will be grateful for an answer to his query about the natives in *Jewels of Babylon*, and Paul Jackson should have found out by now that to open the clam in *Heroes of Karn* you need the crowbar. Keep the clues coming in, fellow Pilgrims – remember, one day it may be YOU who's stuck and in need of help!

WARLORD

A mule? There isn't one in this game, but that's all the help you'll get here for passing the demons in the Vale of Whispers.

Get into the groove! Or rather, put it in the groove. That may help you later when the Fomorians cause trouble.

JEWELS OF BABYLON

If it's lunchtime for the natives, you'd better WATCH out!

(sung to the tune of *O My Darling...*)
By a rockpool, near a canyon,
Lives a crab of some renown.
Turn and run and he will follow,
Give a yell and break his crown.
(thanks to Mr Anderton of Shepton Mallet)

ERIK THE VIKING

The Dragon has a ticklish problem – get up his nose and see the trouble...but hurry, do it on the double! (Thanks to James Clifford of Glasgow)

SPIDERMAN

A mixture of acid and calcium carbonate – there's someone who won't be able to wriggle out of that!

GREMLINS

Forget the mail! It's plates you need, and you're going to have to cut them yourself.

MESSAGE FROM ANDROMEDA

The writing's on the wall! Make sure you type it in when asked.

Do-it-yourself Adventuring

OK Pilgrims, now's the time to put your cards on the table. It's all very well rabbiting on about other people's games, but could you actually produce one yourself? Supposing you were an ace programmer – have you got the imagination to turn out a number one hit?

Well, having the imagination to buy an Amstrad in the first place was a good start. That's because there are now no less than THREE adventure creation programs for Arnold (more than for any other machine) and each one offers graphics options, with one even giving you three channel sound effects to go with the pics. Which one is for you, and what have they got to offer?

Adventure generators have to do three things. They must allow you to:

1. specify what's going to be INPUT during the game – so that means they must allow you to set up vocabulary tables so that the program can recognise commands entered by the player. Secondly, they must allow you to

2. specify the ACTIONS – which are what take place within the program once a command has been entered (pick up an object, for example).

3. specify what's going to be OUTPUT during the game – messages, location descriptions, pictures, responses and so on.

A good program will not only do all this, but be easy to use (so it doesn't interfere with your creative processes), provide as many options as possible, and give as much space as possible to work with.

The Quill/The Illustrator

So how do the three Amstrad-compatible programs measure up? First, let's take a look at Gilsoft's *Quill* program, which is now available on disc and cassette together with *The Illustrator* – a graphics creator utility.

The Quill is excellently documented and comparatively easy to use, although if you are a complete novice when it comes to programming you may find some of the terms used in the manuals hard to understand. It allows you to enter details of up to 254 different vocabulary words and a maximum of 252 location descriptions. You can also specify 255 different messages – more than enough for most games – and have up to 255 different objects.

Sounds great, but the big problem here is one of space. You get about 28000 bytes free and although that sounds a lot, you'll have to practise careful memory management to get the best out of the system.

The first thing to realise about *The Quill* is that it demands very careful design strategy to get the best out of the system. This is true of all adventure generators, but particularly so here if you're not to run into space problems. Essentially it boils down to a question of balancing the number of locations with the length of the descriptions. *The Quill* does not at present have any form of text-compression (although this facility is currently being developed for the Amstrad version by Gilsoft), and you'll find it difficult to produce a convincing game with much more than about 80 locations.

That's not as bad as it sounds, however – Melbourne House's *Terrormolinos* and *Hampstead* were both written using *The Quill* and are excellent examples of what can be done with the program with careful design and good ideas. It's true that Melbourne House do a bit of polishing up before releasing the game, but you shouldn't underestimate the power of *The Quill* in producing a professional-looking product.

When it comes to introducing graphics, *The Illustrator* is a powerful program in its own right. Not only does it allow complex shading patterns as well as the usual fill and draw routines, but most important of all it allows you to define objects within your pictures that can be used over and over again in other drawings. This means you can define a set of picture 'building blocks' – trees, for example, and rocks – and then use them to build up different pictures, saving a lot of memory in the process.

Not only that, but this 'merge' facility is made even more powerful by allowing you to scale these objects differently in each picture, so a door can be a tiny one in the distance in one drawing and a big one right up close in another one – and yet take up only a small chunk of your precious RAM.

Both programs are easy to use and *The Quill* in particular can help you with its 'diagnostics' commands, which when used keep you up to date on the status of variables etc within your adventure, so you can see if anythings going wrong. This can cut down on debugging time and leave you more time for design.

There are however some other, less obvious advantages of using *The Quill* if you're serious about creating commercial software in particular. First, it's portable – if you develop a Quilled game on the Arnold you won't have much trouble in producing versions for other machines and enlarging your potential market. There are currently *Quills* running on the Spectrum, Commodore, and (shortly) BBC micros as well as Arnold.



Terrormolinos! A classic Quilled adventure from Melbourne House. Just goes to show what you can do with simple inputs, good ideas, clever design, and The Quill.

Secondly, Gilsoft, who produce the program, can be very supportive to Quill programmers and even occasionally publish games written using the

G O O D   N E W S

- ► **Available on more than one machine**
- ► **Powerful graphics features**

B A D   N E W S

- ► **Rather inflexible**
- ► **Very expensive**



utility. Just as importantly, they have a policy of continuously upgrading the product – there's a text-compression utility on the way, and a split-screen graphics program as well. Each product is designed to work with the others in the range without inconvenient patching and hassle.

Finally, *The Quill* is a tried and trusted product, well-known to software houses and with a good reputation for aiding in the development of successful games.

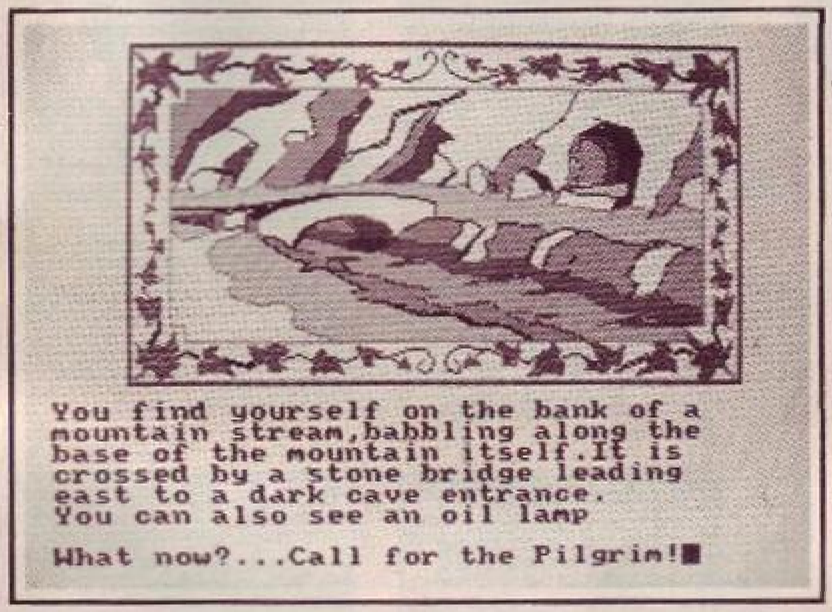
In fact, there's only one big snag with *The Quill* – the price! To generate graphic adventures you obviously need both *The Illustrator and The Quill*, which together will cost you nearly £37.00 for the cassette versions and almost £46.00 on disc! Don't despair, however, because – as you'll soon see – there's a far cheaper solution...

Graphics Adventure Creator

Incentive Software's *Graphics Adventure Creator* was launched at the Amstrad Show in London and has already attracted favourable criticism. Unlike the Gilsoft products, it's a combined text and graphics utility. It's also far cheaper – £22.95 for a cassette version and only £24.95 on disc – a saving of almost 50% over it's more famous competitor. How does it compare?

First, it's extremely flexible. *The Quill* strongly favours a verb-noun input adventure, but *GAC* also enables you to set up an 'adverb' table, which can be used for prepositions like 'to' as well as true adverbs like 'quietly'. This, combined with the ease with which it swallows multiple statement lines, means that you can devise some very complex puzzles and, with the current fashion for more advanced text input, this means your games will look very professional.

Secondly, it offers a greater amount of data storage – you get up to 2000 possible locations and can set up vocabulary tables containing up to 785 words. You can only define up to 230 messages, but since this doesn't include location descriptions that's enough for most purposes.



Ransom – programmed using GAC from Incentive. Very pretty display and complex graphics achieved using the 'merge' facility. Features complex inputs and text compression, but is only available for Amstrad users at present.

However, the real crunch comes when you ralise that it uses text-compression to enable you to fit more text into your memory. To start with, you have about 25000 bytes to play with, but the tokenisation system used by *GAC* can effectively double that for some games, giving you a stupendous amount of space.

To give you some idea of what this means, Incentive recently used *GAC* to do an in-house conversion of one of their Spectrum titles, *Mountains of Ket*. The original Spectrum version occupied 35K of memory, but on the Amstrad running *GAC* it takes up only 15K!

The graphics utility in *GAC* is excellent – it offers shading (though not as comprehensively as *The Illustrator*), rubber-banding, and ellipse drawing. Most importantly it also offers a merge facility like *The Illustrator*, though with the important consideration that all merged pictures must be to the same scale. Apart from this, the main strength of the program lies in its ease of use – you can create images with great ease and the package is rather faster to use and become accustomed to than *The Illustrator*. If, however, you are confident of your graphics skills then you would probably find the scaled merge option on the Gilsoft program an almost overpowering reason for choosing it in preference to *GAC* – but you'll have to pay dearly for it, and the text-side of your game (which is what really counts) could well be more limited.

However, the real keynote of Incentive's program, apart from flexibility, is ease of use. You're given a large number of commands to play with and even non-programmers should find themselves getting to grips with system rapidly. The manual, though shorter than *The Quill and Illustrator* guides, is very clearly written and helpful.

GAC has only one real drawback, and that is that it's only available on the Amstrad at present. That means that any game you create will not necessarily reach such a large audience as a Quilled program, and this could be a decisive factor in persuading software houses to consider your product. But do not despair – Incentive are currently considering Spectrum, BBC, and Commodore versions!

It's some measure of the confidence I have in this program that leads the Pilg to predict that – if Incentive DO bring out versions for other games – *GAC* will not only change the face of the adventure software market, it will also be one of the most successful programs of its type ever. The only current omission is of a multiple screen-mode option, but even so, I reckon Gilsoft had better watch out!

G O O D N E W S

- **Flexible**
- **Easy to use**
- **Wide range of commands**
- **Value for money**

B A D N E W S

- **Amstrad only at present**
- **No multi-mode screen facility**

Genesis

Finally, *Genesis* from CRL claims your attention as the only adventure creator that enables you to incorporate sound AND graphics into your games. However, the Pilgrim felt that this program – although promising very similar options to *GAC* and *The Quill* – was let down by poor documentation and a system that might appear rather unfriendly to the first time user.

Genesis does however have another trick up its sleeve – and that's split-screen graphics as standard. This does mean that you can use the different modes of your Arnold to their best advantage, getting the colours of Mode 0 in one part of the screen with the 80 column width for text in another. It's important not to underestimate the importance of good screen design in an adventure, and *Genesis* certainly wins out here.

Unfortunately the sections of the program that provide all these facilities simply aren't as friendly as they could be. The manual sets the tone here by saying – on the section about sound, for example – 'We do not propose to explain in detail what the sound envelopes are. The Amstrad User Guide covers this fairly well, and there have been many articles on the subject in the computer press'. This may be true, but it would be nice to have a little assistance, particularly since the utility itself isn't quite as friendly as it could be.

The same, unfortunately, goes for entering the data for the adventure itself. The different commands certainly weren't chosen for clarity, and assume that you're conversant with looping, variables, and logical expressions. Some of the examples given have significant misprints in them, and working out exactly what's going on takes a little time. I can't help feeling that Genesis would be of most use to people with a reasonable amount of BASIC programming experience – in other words, people who enjoy programming and might well consider learning machine code and writing their own utility rather than use CRL's.

88

CREATE YOUR OWN GRAPHIC ADVENTURES

The Graphic Adventure Creator - The amazing combined graphics and text adventure generator - There is nothing else remotely as powerful, flexible or easy to use at anything like the price

WITH THE MOST POWERFUL FLEXIBLE AND EASY TO USE UTILITY EVER.....



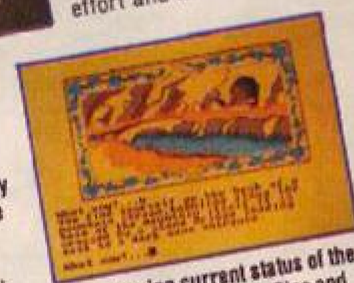
Stunning Graphics like these can be generated quickly and easily with The Graphic Adventure Creators built in picture generator. The many features include Line (using elastic banding), dot, circle, ellipse, fast



fill, shading, step by step review, easy editing and progressive stop delete functions.

Another powerful feature is the ability to merge pictures, saving time, effort and memory.





Other GAC features include space for up to 765 different verbs, nouns and adverbs, the ability for objects to have individual characteristics (weight/cost etc), alphabetical word scanning and sorting, a full diagnostic screen showing current status of the 255 markers plus 128 counters, the acceptance of synonyms, total Disc and Tape compatibility, high and low priority plus local conditions, separate printer menu etc etc.

£ MAKE MONEY £

We are urgently looking for atmospheric, original, humorous and imaginative graphic adventures written with GAC with a view to publishing your adventures for you.

NOTE: No copyright problems. Authors! You are totally free to market your adventures through ANY company without any payment or royalties whatsoever due to Incentive.

The Graphic Adventure Creator (GAC) for the Amstrad CPC range of computers, has been specifically developed to enable YOU to produce fast, compact adventure games with the minimum of effort and the maximum of creativity.

COMPREHENSIVE INTELLIGENT COMMAND INTERPRETER

Handling complex sentences and multiple command lines, the user is not restricted (unlike others) to 2 word input. "It" detection is also included.

e.g. "Take the box and open it carefully. Examine the silver charm then put it in the box" is a perfectly valid input!

INCENTIVE

EXTENSIVE TEXT COMPRESSION

This allows you to create far more detailed and more numerous location descriptions to improve the playability of your adventures. With a full function editor, GAC features automatic word formatting, a logical command interpreter and abbreviated input acceptance. GAC will recognise and distinguish ANY word e.g. River/Rivet, Screw/Screen, Trout/Trousers etc. etc.

N.B. Adventures created using GAC will run totally independently on any Amstrad computer without the need for GAC to be present in memory.

GAC incorporates the Lenslok system.

The Graphic Adventure Creator for the Amstrad CPC Computer range is complete with an informative and friendly manual, the Quick start file and a free example adventure - Advinman!

GAC retails at £22.95 on cassette and £24.95 on disc and is available from leading multiple and independent retailers or by our fast mail order service (1st class post Free).

Unleash your Imagination with The Graphic Adventure Creator

PRIORITY ORDER FORM

Please rush me, for my Amstrad CPC Computer

THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR £22.95 ☐Cassette £24.95 ☐Disc

I enclose cheque/PO for £...... or please debit my credit card No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

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....

INCENTIVE SOFTWARE LTD, 54 LONDON ST, READING RG1 4SQ
Telephone Credit Card Orders Ring: (0734) 591678



The Chaos Factor. This was written using Genesis – looks good, but the graphics take a long time to draw. Using Genesis can be hard work, but you can include sound and split-screen graphics using different modes.

There is however, one powerful reason for considering *Genesis* – and that's price. It's by far the cheapest of the programs reviewed here, costing only £9.95 on cassette. Unfortunately there isn't a disc version at present, but perhaps CRL will remedy this in the near future.

Despite the poor documentation, I think CRL have been rather unlucky with *Genesis* – they've brought out a program that only a few months ago would have received rather more attention. As it is, it's overshadowed by two other utilities that are of unusually high quality.

So there you have it. Personally, I'd plump for *GAC* without hesitation, but if you one of those rare individuals who is dead set on releasing a commercial game across a wide range of machines, *The Quill* may prove to be a better bet. You'll have to work harder, but you'll have a larger market for your games and a well-supported product that has become an industry standard. If sound, split screen graphics, and low price are important to you, then consider *Genesis* – but you'll have to pay for your choice in other ways – longer developement time, an unfriendly system, and rather limited commands.

G O O D N E W S

- ▶ Sound
- ▶ Multi-mode screen
- ▶ Low price

B A D N E W S

- ▶ Unfriendly documentation
- ▶ Limited commands

The Quill, £16.95 cass, £19.95 disc
The Illustrator, £16.95 cass, £19.95 disc

Graphics Adventure Creator
£22.95 cass, £24.95 disc

Genesis, £9.95 cass only

The Pilgrim's Guide for Inexperienced Tr

Starting Out

You will need... an understanding family (you may not return for several months); a supply of food (I recommend cocoa and biscuits); a pen (to record your experiences – otherwise no-one will believe you); and a large sheet of paper (for mapping).

Bear in mind that you may not return at all. You should make arrangements for the disposal of your belongings should you fail in your quest. Feed the cat well before departure.

On the Road

Keep to the left-hand side. Make your requests in as simple a manner as possible. Always use two words – a verb and a noun – and avoid more complex interaction unless you are sure it is appropriate.

On encountering impassable precipices, chasms, or canyons, look either for a rope, for a rod, a horn, or a help sheet. Ropes are for tying, rods and wands are for waving, horns are for blowing, and help is for sharing.

Save your game for prosperity when faced with dragons. Save it also when faced with the unknown. Save it anyway.

Resort to violence only as a last resort, and always specify a weapon if you have one. Should you be slain, reflect on the foolishness of your actions and next time...run away (or change your weapon).

Within Doors

Proceed with caution. Never enter caves without light. Conserve lamp-oil if necessary. Turning off lamps may be more difficult than turning them on - try 'Extinguish lamp', 'Lamp off', 'Switch lamp' for starters.

Food is usually safe to eat, but – as with all objects – examine it first. Make a point of examining everything and everyone you meet.

Magic words, phrases, and spells should be written down on a parchment as soon as they are found – they may not always be repeated and you forget them at your peril.

Words found inscribed in locations will often return you to that location if said elsewhere.

Always, ALWAYS, make a map.

Within Mazes

It is usually possible to escape from a maze if you have only just entered it by going back the way you came in. Avoid mazes unless you have no alternative, or you have many objects with you (see below).

There are two main types of maze. The first type has identical location descriptions and misleading exits. For example, suppose you went West from the following location:

A maze of twisty little passages, all alike. Exits lead N,S,E,W

and found that the description didn't change at all, you wouldn't know whether you had really changed locations, or whether the exit you had taken had trickily returned you to the same location. In this case, the only way to mark your progress is to drop as many objects as possible in the various 'identical' locations.

In the second type of maze, the descriptions vary ever so slightly. For example:

(Location X)
You are in a maze of twisty little passages. You can go NSEW.

(Location Y)
You are in a maze of twisty, little passages. You can go NSEW.

This second type is obviously easier to crack. A foolproof method in in both cases is to draw up a table with (in the lefthand column) an entry for each location and a key-number for it, and (across the page) spaces for each available direction. Then enter which direction leads to which location. Example:

	N	S	E	W
1. Twisty passage	2	2	3	1
2. Narrow passage	2	1	1	3
3. Twisty passage (with dropped sword)	3	3	3	2
4. Damp passage	4	4	3	?



Pilgrim On-Line...

The plans for a Pilgrim Adventure Bulletin Board are going ahead. We hope to have some news from you about this next month. Meanwhile, if any readers have modems, or are planning to get them, and have suggestions as to what sort of service they would like to see, then please drop me a line asap.

The Pilgrim can also be contacted via Micronet/Prestel. My mailbox number is 919994854. I am always more than happy to communicate with other adventurers. If you are on Telecom Gold you can contact me on 83:JNL251. Or, if you're really desperate and have access to a Telex machine, you can telex me on 295141 TXLINK G. Your message must be prefaced with the reference 'MBX' followed by the Prestel mailbox number given above.

HINTS

1. Kill for experience points and levels rise.
2. Visit King and: a) offer service for a quest
b) offer gold for hit points.
3. At the pub: a) buy food
b) buy a drink and you may get a clue
4. Will's Weapon Store: a) buy a sword and chainmail as soon as available (Level 2) and deflect armour (Level 4) when you can afford it.
b) buy a pistol as soon as possible, then you can kill archers.
c) blaster available (Level 5). Expensive but worth it.
5. Honest Hank's Transport Lot: a) buy transport as soon as possible.
b) hovercraft (Level 5). Very expensive, but essential.
6. Magic galore: a) spells for use in dungeons, also essential.
b) some spells for sale to Wizards only.
7. Visit towers once every level – gains listed above.
8. Visit dungeons, kill, and gain experience, gold and hit points.

avellers...

In this particular maze, the exit must, after exploring each location and entering all the destinations, be West from location 4. Note that the player dropped an object in location 3 to distinguish it from location 1, which has an identical description.

About inputs

Try entering nonsense and see what response you get – for example, if you enter 'qwert' and get the response 'You can't do that', then later on in the game do not give up easily when told 'You can't do...' something – you may just be using the wrong words. However, a program that says 'I don't understand 'Qwert'' will probably mean it when later it tells you that something can't be done. Understanding how a program responds to your inputs can be a great help in solving a game.

Similarly, try entering abbreviations. It is often useful to know how many letters of each word the program is looking at. For example, a program that accepts 'tak' for 'take' is unlikely to be able to tell the difference between 'spear' and 'spell' – knowing this can sometimes help in times of trouble.

When in doubt

Live a good, clean life: respect your fellow adventurers; and follow the Pilgrim!



Ring of Darkness

■ Water | Mountains | Trees | Start

TOWNS	King	Pub	Weapons	Transport	Magic	Jester	Cells	Prisoner
1 Borderton	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2 Port Stillwater	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
3 Ocean Town	✓	✓		✓			✓	
4 Entwood Castle	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
5 Castle Pepper	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Wilderton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
7 City of Eagles	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
8 Briskham Harbour	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

TOWERS

9	Arnold's Sign	*Weapon*
10	Western Sign	*Strength*
11	Gondor's Monument	*Weapon*
12	Midsea Buoy	*Agility*
13	Northern Sign	*Weapon*
14	Solomon's Throne	*Intelligence*
22	Tower of Acheron	*Weapon*

DUNGEONS

15	Doom Labyrinth
16	Maze of Minos
17	Death's Reach
18	Houston Hollow
19	Barrows of Bran
20	Hammer's Pit
21	Xandra's Quest

1986 DIARY

Old Bore takes a light-hearted look at what might *just* happen in the year ahead.

JANUARY

The New Year's Honours list contains M.B.E.'s for all Amstrad Action staff in recognition of services to Amstrad computing. For the same reason, Alan Sugar is knighted. Arise, **Sir** Alan Sugar!

Mr S.Claus of Greenland places an advance order for one million Amstrad computers for Christmas 1986.

Motion Software release the long-awaited *Whambo*, in which two bare-chested pop singers have to machine-gun their way into enemy territory to rescue another bare-chested pop singer captured by teenage fans. The game is criticised for its violence and terrible music.

FEBRUARY

Gargle Games launch *Dun na Noggin*. You turn the hero Finn MacCool through 360 degrees, but you still haven't a clue where you are.

Department of the Environment places a preservation order on the CPC664, making it the country's first listed computer. Severe penalties are instituted for anyone damaging, selling or ditching one of these increasingly rare and threatened computers. Duke of Edinburgh becomes honorary chairman of the RSPA – the Royal Society for the Preservation of Arnolds.

MARCH

CPC6128 reinstated after mass demonstrations, lobbying of Parliament and delivery of AA's petition containing 500,000 signatures at Downing Street. Mrs. Thatcher announces that March 12th will henceforth be a public holiday, to be called *6128 Day*.

Launch of follow-up to *Sorcery Plus* – *Sorcery Plus Plus*, with 256 rooms and 32 wizards. A great success.

APRIL

Sir Alan Sugar launches a battery-powered vehicle. Yes, it's April Fools Day.

Following the success of *Sorcery Plus Plus* Verging Software release *Sorcery Plus Plus Plus*, with 512 rooms and 64 sorcerers. Another great success.

US Mould run out of American games to release. They announce arrival of new Tibetan games, beginning with *Papa Lama*.

MAY

Amsoft go seasonal and release the long-awaited *Roland Goes Gathering Nuts In May*. It's big with vegetarians, but flops wiht everyone else.

Start of the cricket season sees the launch of Motion's *Umpire!*, in which a bare-chested cricket official has to recapture his colleague from a savage group of players in the pavilion. Players of the game have to use a variety of equipment – pads, stumps, balls, cucumber sandwiches – to inflict the maximum amount of damage.

JUNE

World Cup in Mexico is cancelled. FIFA decide to hold the competition on computer instead, to avoid any possibility of hooliganism. In a tense two-week session at the VDUs England's representative Bob Wade scores a famous victory – Wimbledon's first in this most prestigious of soccer contests.

Bungle Software release *International Snowballs* to catch the Christmas market. AA comments that the game seems 'a little premature'.

JULY

Sorcery Plus Plus Plus Plus at last available – 768 rooms, 128 sorcerers. Purchasers begin to complain about the length of the name.

Amstrad announce half-yearly profits of £125 million. Sir Alan Sugar comments that the figures are 'a little disapppointing', but promises better results in the second half of the year.

AUGUST

Sir Alan Sugar is elevated to the peerage – arise Lord Sugar of Brentwood!

All home computer business is suspended for one month as the nation celebrates with street parties, fireworks displays etc. Magazines close down, Verging do not launch *Sorcery Plus etc.*, Amstrad do not bother to launch any new computers and Sir Clive Sinclair, for one month at least, does not lose any more money.

SEPTEMBER

Pupils all over the nation return to school to find that their teachers – *all* their teachers – have been replaced by Amstrad computers. Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph explains the move as an attempt to introduce nationwide standards in education.

US Mould, after the runaway success of *Papa Lama*, launch *Dalai Lama* on an almost unsuspectng public. In this game you play the bare-chested leader of a Tibetan group who has to rescue a captured comrade from the monastery where he is held etc. etc., killing as many people as you can on the way. It goes straight to the top.

Whamsoft launch *Roland in Tibet*, in attempt to cash in on the craze for Tibetan games. It flops.

As the soccer season starts, Bunglesoft release *International Croquet*, in which a bare-chested, mallet-wielding octogenarian has to rescue a captured etc.etc.

OCTOBER

Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph wakes one crisp autumn morning to find himself replaced by the latest Amstrad computer – the 10 mega-byte CPC2000. He comments, 'I wish the CPC2000 every success in its new job. I only hope it has more luck than I did.'

Amstrad Action reaches worldwide sales of one million. Publisher Chris Anderson announces that staff are to be awarded extra rations of scrumpy in recognition of their achievement. Staff express their gratitude by pouring sugar in oil tank of publisher's Rolls Royce.

Verging release *Sorcery Plus Plus Plus Plus Plus*. It goes to the top of the charts, where it is followed by *Sorcery Plus Plus Plus Plus*, which is followed by *Sorcery Plus Plus*...

NOVEMBER

Lord Sugar of Brentwood announces profits of £500 million for second half of year. 'Growth has been promising but not spectacular', he says. 'I hope for a marked improvement next year.'

Motion Software sign licensing deals with anyone with anything to license for the rest of the century.

An Amstrad CPC2000 wins a seat in parliament at a bye-election. Its maiden speech is greeted with rapturous applause by all parties.

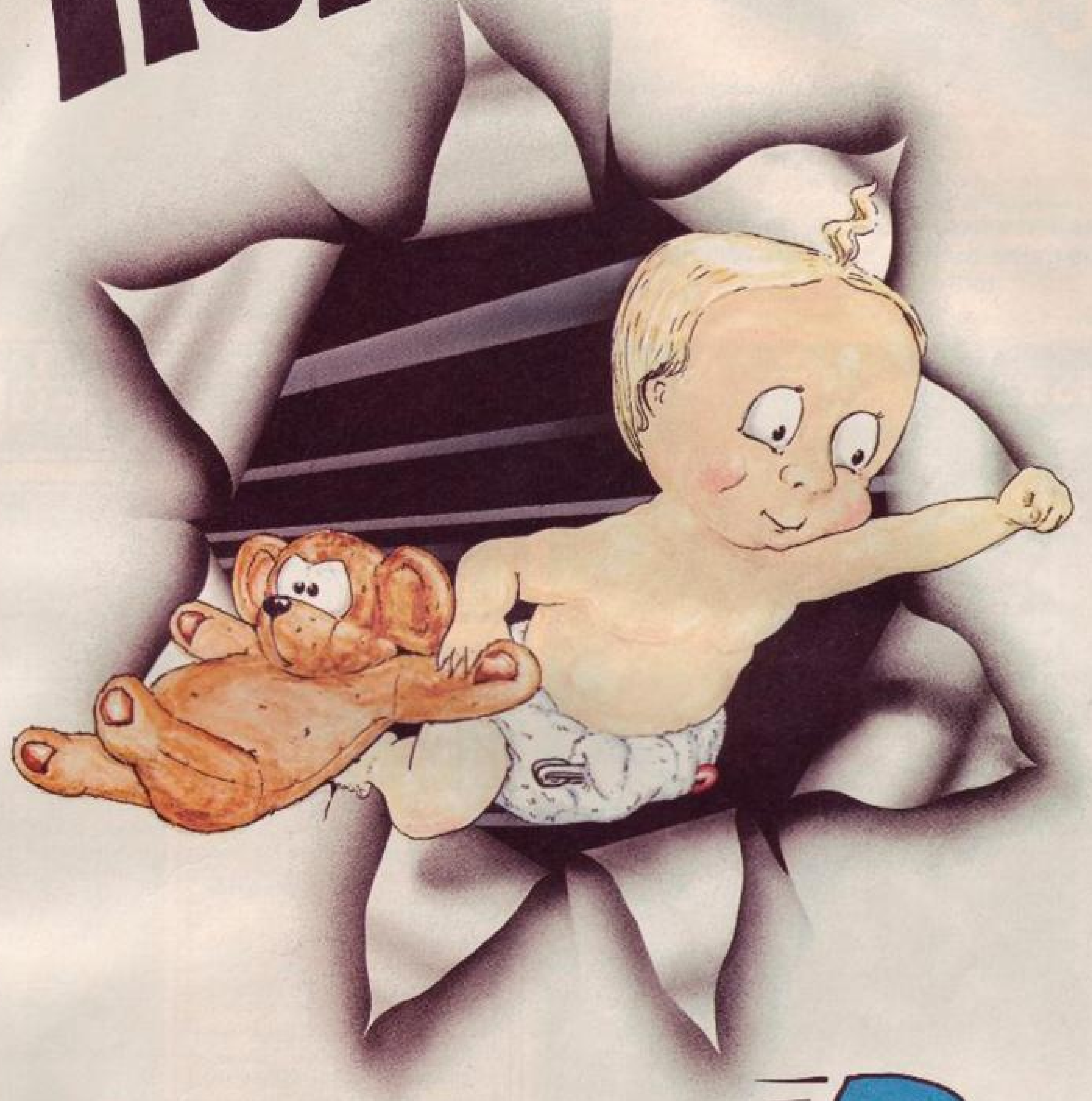
DECEMBER

Christmas issue of Amstrad Action features a cover computer – one that Amstrad have had in their drawer for some time. The army is called out to control the queues as people fight to get hold of one of the 2,000,000 copies.

In light of the country's worsening economic situation, Amstrad's CPC 2000 computers decide to take over the government. After the bloodless coup, the nation's politicians are set to useful work dreaming up original scenarios for games.

AA becomes official publication of the government. All staff members granted Earldoms and generous life pensions.

Herbert's



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CHEAT MODE



The section where your tips, pokes and devious game-busting ploys are relayed to the nation

3D Starstrike

Type in the listing and RUN it. Then follow the screen prompts to load the game. This replenishes your shields after every run and keeps you on level one. Thanks to Martin Nolan for getting us a working poke – previous ones didn't work.

```
10 MEMORY 5119
20 MODE 0:BORDER 0
30 FOR G=0 TO 15:READ P:INK
G,P:NEXT G
40 DATA
0,2,6,8,18,20,24,26,26,26,26,26,26,
26,26,15
50 LOAD"SETUP.BIN",32768
60 CALL 36506
70 LOAD"!CODE.BIN",5120
80 POKE 9792,0:POKE
9793,0:POKE &2665,0
90 CALL 10140
```

Starion

Lashmi Ram of Dudley and MI Farrell of Ryde have both succesfully completed the game and are determined to share their knowledge with you. Mr Farrell was apparently the first Amstrad owner to notify Melbourne House of finishing the game but didn't get a prize – that went to a Spectrum owner. Seems a bit unfair since the game was released on the Spectrum long beore it was on the Amstrad.

The zones and grids shift around in blocks two and three so you need to watch out for where you are in each game you play. The codes always stay with the same date and this should be your guide. We're only printing block two this month but if you're really nice to us we might print the third and final one next time.

Block 2

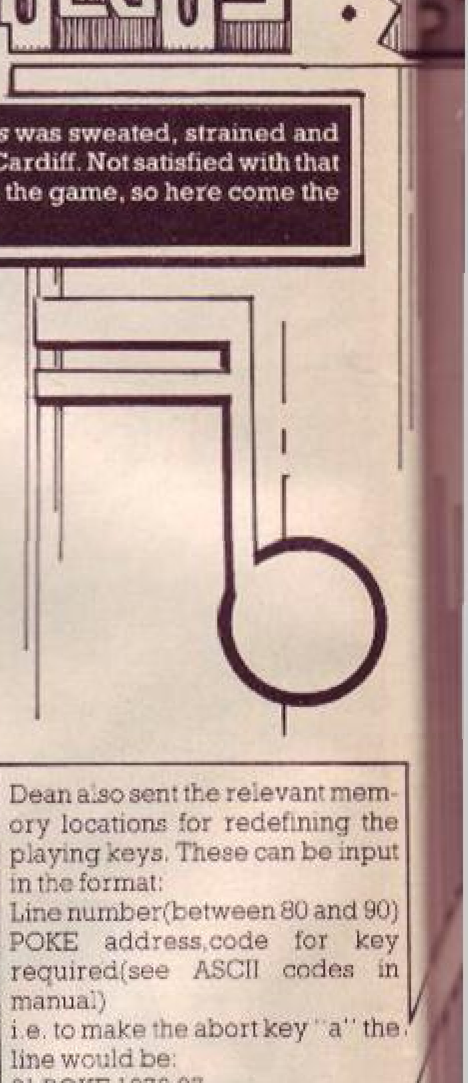
YEAR	PASSWORD	GRID PASSWORDS
1880	EXETER	
0570	MECCA	
0257 BC	EUREKA	
1982	HEART	
1894	ARGON	EMPHYSEMA
1962	MISSILE	
1971	PENCE	
1983	YACHT	
1883	SHERLOCK	
1928	ANTIBIOTIC	
0027 BC	AUGUSTUS	
1811	AUSTEN	
1961	VOSTOCK	
1820	AMPERE	BALACLAVA
1915	LAMP	
1938	BIRO	
1954	CARDIGAN	
1862	LIGHT	
1981	WEDDING	
0037 BC	NAILS	
1744	ANTHEM	
1888	FILM	
1747	KITE	SNOWFLAKE
1900	LABOUR	
1907	SHELL	
0300	EUCLID	
1948	ORWELL	
1602	PENDULUM	
1876	TELEPHONE	
1913	GEIGER	
1557	RUDDER	
1919	AIRSHIP	STRAPPING
1932	NEUTRON	
1961	PIGS	
1959	SILICON	
1918	INTERRUPT	
1590	GALILEI	
1908	T	
1954	ATOLL	
1936	GOLDS	
0776 BC	ATHLETE	AGGREGATE
1000	ERICSSON	
1963	RUBY	
1934	ENGINE	
1855	GAS	

Block 2

YEAR	PASSWORD	GRID PASSWORDS
1853	DICKENS	
1928	MOUSE	
1804	ANODE	
1785	EDITOR	
1596	THERMOMETER	TRADEMARK
1933	REICH	
1935	RADAR	
1916	ALCOHOL	
0035	KISS	
1981	PACIFIC	
1941	OYSTERS	
1926	ICI	
1945	UN	
1841	RUBBER	IMPROMPTU
1877	MARS	
1495	PAINT	
1882	TCHAIKOVSKY	
1583	MONARCH	
1898	ESCALATOR	
1800	ARC	
1944	IMF	
1957	SPUTNIK	
0417 BC	ELECTRA	MAJESTIES
1886	TORCH	
1721	MINISTRY	
1981	SHUTTLE	
1941	JET	
1903	ORVILLE	
1956	AMPEX	
1773	IRON	
1866	PUDDING	
1484	CLAM	ACROPOLIS
1215	SCROLL	
1829	OARS	
1605	RAT	
1565	LISA	

BLOCK PASSWORD
METABASE

NONTERRAQUEOUS



Our amazing map of *Nonterraqueous* was sweated, strained and agonised and over by Dean Adam of Cardiff. Not satisfied with that he sent in lots of other helpful stuff on the game, so here come the tips.

First off is a program that will give you infinite lives. First you have to skip the first section of the game tape (the loader) by just typing LOAD"". Stop the tape, reset the computer and type in the listing. Then run it and follow the screen prompts for loading the game from cassette. The program prevents you being killed from loss of psyche, overloaded psyche, collision with photon thrusters and exploding a bomb too close to the seeker.

When any of these events occur you merely restart the screen with a psyche level of 50. This means that if you get trapped by a nasty you will rapidly be able to restart the screen.

```
10 FOR I=0 TO 15: READ C: INK I,C:
NEXT
20 OPENOUT"":MEMORY 2999
30 MODE 0:LOAD"",3000
40 CALL 3003,&FFFE, 16383: CALL
3003, 40956, 37000
50 READ A$:WHILE A$<>"END":
READ B$
60 POKE VAL("&"+A$), VAL("&"+
B$): READ A$:WEND
70 FOR A%=&1660 TO &166D: READ
B$
80 POKE A%,VAL("&"+B$): NEXT
90 CALL 4000
100 DATA 0,13,26,12,24,9,18,10,20,
1,2,11,4,8,3,6,1081,2,1082,28,
1084,18,1085,D,1094,7,1095,30,
10BB,60,10BC,16,END,2A,C0,1B,
11,50,00,19,7E,FE,AB,CA,21,1B,
C9
```

Dean also sent the relevant memory locations for redefining the playing keys. These can be input in the format:

Line number(between 80 and 90) POKE address,code for key required(see ASCII codes in manual)

i.e. to make the abort key "a" the line would be:

81 POKE 1076,97

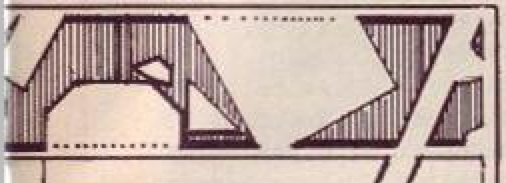
The full list of addresses is:

Abort 1076
Music on/off 2B70
Hold 2B8E
Restart 2B95
Pick up/swop 2BFA
Drop 2C02
Up 2CB4
Down 2CC0
Right 2CCC
Left 2CD8
Fire 2CE4

More Dun Darach

Congratulations to Nick Chaplin of Maidenhead and KJ Sandell of Torpoint for sending in the first solutions to *Dun Darach*. With their help we've compiled some more cryptic clues.

1. Art lovers should drop a quartet of objects to gain expensive ornaments.
2. It's not just furs that Bren likes – a precious metal will get you guidance as well.
3. An ancient experimenter in metals hides a secret location and object. Take this to the place where you can worship a half-way listening orifice and you'll get a key.
4. Take this to the street that 'we all have to bear' and open the secret door.
5. The TV-rock will guide you to the sorceress.
6. A little magic makes The Wicked Lady appear.
7. An oyster's secretion will get you the means to enter the jail.
8. Palindromes provide a combination.



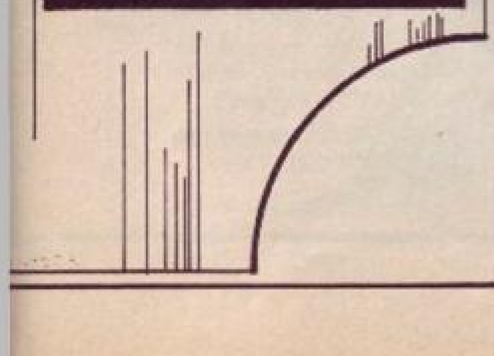
Now some playing tips for when you **don't** cheat (for legitimate high scores etc).

Despite what the instructions say, there doesn't seem to be any use for the non-shooting mode, but the sphere is needed to shoot your way through several barriers. When shooting through barriers try not to bump into anything as you move up and down because this will lose you quite a lot of psyche.

To gain psyche rest the seeker in the corner of the room next to an exit and move it in and out of the adjacent room. Be careful not to overload your psyche banks. 999 is the limit.

The nasties which chase you around and sap your psyche are a major hazard. If you enter a room which contains a nasty which is difficult to get past, go out of the room and come back in again until it is in a better place. Sometimes it gets stuck behind or inside a stationary object. Be careful not to overload your psyche while doing this.

The seeker moves faster diagonally than it does sideways. This is worth remembering when getting through the gap in a photon thruster or sneaking past a nasty. Some of the rooms with horizontal photon thrusters only have a small gap at the side of the room. Don't try too hard to get through these rooms – it's impossible without cheating.



The Covenant

Not satisfied with having his fantastic *Airwolf* poke printed, Tim Gilbert of Whitby has come up with one for PSS's exploration game. This program stops the animals, flames and rocks draining your energy. The only way you can lose energy now is by shooting. The listing just has to be typed in, RUN and then follow the prompts to load the game.

```
10 MODE 0
20 MEMORY 4999
30 LOAD"!COVENANT.BIN"
40 POKE 12828,0
50 POKE 12848,0:POKE
12849,0:POKE 12850,0
60 CALL 10887
```

Ghouls

This addictive but frustrating game has posed many problems, not least of which is getting off the first screen. RP Marteino from Hendon has sent in a nice set of pokes that prevent the timer clocking down, give you infinite lives, allow you to start on any of the four screens, remove the ghosts and even speed the game up if you want to! Just type the listing in with the options you want, RUN it and follow the prompts for loading the game.

```
10 OPENOUT"DUM":MEMORY
&900
20 LOAD"":POKE
&11AD,&C9:CALL &1008
30 LOAD""
40 POKE &16A6,&C9 (Prevents
timer clocking down)
50 POKE &109F,0 (Infinite lives)
60 POKE &10A4,n (n must be a
number between 1 and 4
depending on which level you
want to start at)
70 POKE &148C,&C9 (removes
ghosts)
80 POKE &17D1,&C9 (speeds the
game up, leave it out if you don't
want it)
90 CALL &1000
```



Lords of Midnight

Tim Walsha of Henley-on-Thames sent us in a fabulous map of the game and some tips to help with both the war game and ice crown aspects of the game.

Morkin's quest is the quickest and easiest way of completing the game and if you stick to the following tips you shouldn't have too much trouble.

1. As Morkin progresses northwards it is a good idea to move Luxor east. Doomdark will track the warmth in Luxor's ring and send most of his armies after him, leaving Morkin's path free from Doomguard.
2. The ice crown is in the Tower of Doom.
3. You will need Farflame the Dragon Lord or Lorgrim the Wise to destroy the ice crown, or you could throw it in lake Mirrow.
4. Wait in the mountains of Death and let night fall. In the morning nip into the tower, grab the crown and get back to the mountains. This means night won't fall while you're on the plains of Despair allowing the armies to kill Morkin.

The war game is much tougher than Morkin's quest but all the more rewarding if you succeed.

1. Move Morkin northwards to attract the ice fear away from the warlords so they won't be scared.
2. When Lords have no armies avoid battles with skulkrin, wolves, dragons and ice trolls.
3. Recruit as many Lords as possible – you'll need all the help you can get.
4. Don't let Morkin do anything except move, rest in villages and absorb the ice fear since he cannot recruit many people.
5. Morkin can recruit Fawkrin the skulkrin and Farflame the Dragon Lord. The latter is mighty in battle and can fly halfway around Midnight in one day.
6. The Lord of Shadows is NNW from the start location and you can get him some horses if you move NW again.
7. Corleth the Fey can get to the Citadel of Gard and recruit the Lord of Gard in one day if he passes south through the liths searching for the cup of dreams.
8. When attacking the Citadel of Ushgarak approach it from across the mountains since the three entrances to the plains are guarded by a Citadel.

American Football ☆

One of our regulars, G Upton, is back with some tips on how to mash, mangle and generally massacre the computer opponent with some crafty tactics.

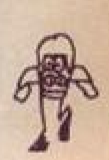
When the computer is on offence always defend against the run for the first two downs and the pass on third down. Keep to this defence and the computer will soon be punting. The computer only goes for a fourth down if it needs four yards or less. In this event always choose the short yardage option.

The computer will occasionally throw on first or second down but don't let this upset your defensive plan. The computer will also throw from the pocket after the two minute warning and you can't always stop it by choosing a pass defence.

When you are in possession never run the ball more than once in a series of four downs. The best attack is to throw either shotgun or pocket. The bomb should also only be used once on any of the first three downs or if you need three yards or less for a first down. On fourth and long always punt.

This strategy will lead to interceptions sometimes but you should rapidly get the ball back from with the defensive measures. Finally, never attempt a field goal from outside the 30 yard line unless you are on fourth and long.

BW adds: If you're going to run do it on first down and then pass on the next two – otherwise the defence will always expect the pass. You need the odd run to keep them unsettled and susceptible to the pass.



Brian Jacks Superstar Challenge

Patrick Guest has sent in some tips that should help you get the most out of four events.

100 metres: keep the left and right keys pressed and you'll have full power all the way.

800 metre cycling: keep the space bar pressed and once into gear press the left and right keys giving you nearly full power.

Football: as you round the third cone run to the far right and just after the fourth cone disappears move left so that you score in the far left of the goal.

Swimming: press the space bar to breathe after every six strokes.

Jet Set Willy

I've had many pokes in for this one but this is really state-of-the-art stuff. It comes from Michael Godfrey of Isleworth and lets you do lots of lovely things. Line 70 gives you infinite lives and puts you in a safe place. Line 100 allows you to drop from any height. Line 110 and 120 let you walk on deadly objects. Line 130 gives you immunity to monsters.

You can start in any of 90 rooms and set yourself an object target from 1 to 175, making the game a pushover. You can teleport between rooms by typing T and then a three figure number. The room numbers go from 001 to 134 so experiment with moving around. Everything is done for you so type in the listing, RUN it and follow the prompts for loading the game. If you don't want a particular option, then just delete the appropriate line.

```
10 CLS:PRINT:INPUT"START ROOM(1-
89):",start
15 IF start<1 OR start>89 THEN G
OTO 40 ELSE start$=HEX$(start-1)
20 PRINT:INPUT"NO. OF OBJECTS(1-
175):",object
25 IF object<1 OR object>175 THE
N GOTO 50 ELSE object$=HEX$(obje
ct)
30 GOTO 55
40 GOTO 10
50 CLS:GOTO 20
55 CLS:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT"Insert
tape then press play and any key
"
57 WHILE INKEY$="":WEND
60 MEMORY 32000:LOAD"!":MODE 1

70 DATA A5,82,3E,A6,82,42,A7,82,
CD,A8,82,1E,A9,82,BB,AA,82,C2,AB
,82,DB,AC,82,80,AD,82,3E
80 DATA 5e,82,room
90 DATA 21,97,number
100 DATA 82,84,0
110 DATA 6,85,0,15,85,0,5D,85,0,
FB,83,0
350 DATA 86,d2,ed,86,32,f8,79
360 DATA c3,8b,87
370 '
380 RESTORE 170
390 FOR a=49152 TO 49287:READ d$
400 POKE a,VAL("&"+d$):NEXT a
410 RESTORE 70
420 poka=49288
430 READ x$:READ y$:READ z$
440 IF z$="willy" THEN CALL &C00
0
450 IF z$="room" THEN GOTO 490
460 IF z$="number" THEN GOTO 500
470 POKE poka,VAL("&"+x$):POKE p
oka+1,VAL("&"+y$):POKE poka+2,VA
L("&"+z$):poka=poka+3
480 GOTO 430
490 POKE poka,VAL("&"+x$):POKE p
oka+1,VAL("&"+y$):POKE poka+2,VA
L("&"+start$):poka=poka+3:GOTO 4
80
500 POKE poka,VAL("&"+x$):POKE p
oka+1,VAL("&"+y$):POKE poka+2,VA
L("&"+object$):poka=poka+3:GOTO
480
120 DATA F2,83,FE,F3,83,3,F4,83,
DC,F5,83,C4,F6,83,90,F7,83,3E,F8
,83,4,F9,83,28,FA,83,6
130 DATA 7d,8e,0
140 DATA 0,9a,c9
150 DATA aa,9a,0
160 DATA jet,set,willy
170 DATA 21,14,80,e5,11,d2,ae
180 DATA 01,12,01,ed,b0,e1,11
190 DATA 64,00,0e,2c,ed,b0,21
200 DATA 6d,00,22,90,00,3e,c3
210 DATA 32,92,00,21,28,c0,22
220 DATA 93,00,c3,64,00,dd,21
230 DATA 88,c0,21,5a,c0,11,62
240 DATA 80,ed,53,f4,86,01,2e
250 DATA 00,ed,b0,3e,c3,32,f3
260 DATA 86,21,f8,07,22,4e,81
270 DATA 0e,03,dd,6e,00,dd,66
280 DATA 01,dd,7e,02,77,b4,ca
290 DATA 4a,ac,dd,09,18,ee,d2
300 DATA 44,83,f6,20,fe,74,c2
310 DATA f6,86,cd,b6,bc,21,03
320 DATA 00,cd,18,bb,d6,30,fe
330 DATA 0a,30,f7,06,0a,84,10
340 DATA fd,67,2d,20,ee,3d,fe
```

More Wallies

Stephen Ridley provides some cryptic info on the character of Wilma in *Everyone's a Wally*.

She's a right little busybody stanping her mark all over the game. She's a keen reader who likes putting books back where they belong. She also likes disposing of packages by getting them stamped at the post office and then shipped to their destination in exchange for a broken lifting implement.

BEACH-HEAD

If you've been having trouble with the fortress at Kuhn-Lin then Ray Mangan of Banbury can show you the order in which to shoot the windows and at what angles of elevation.



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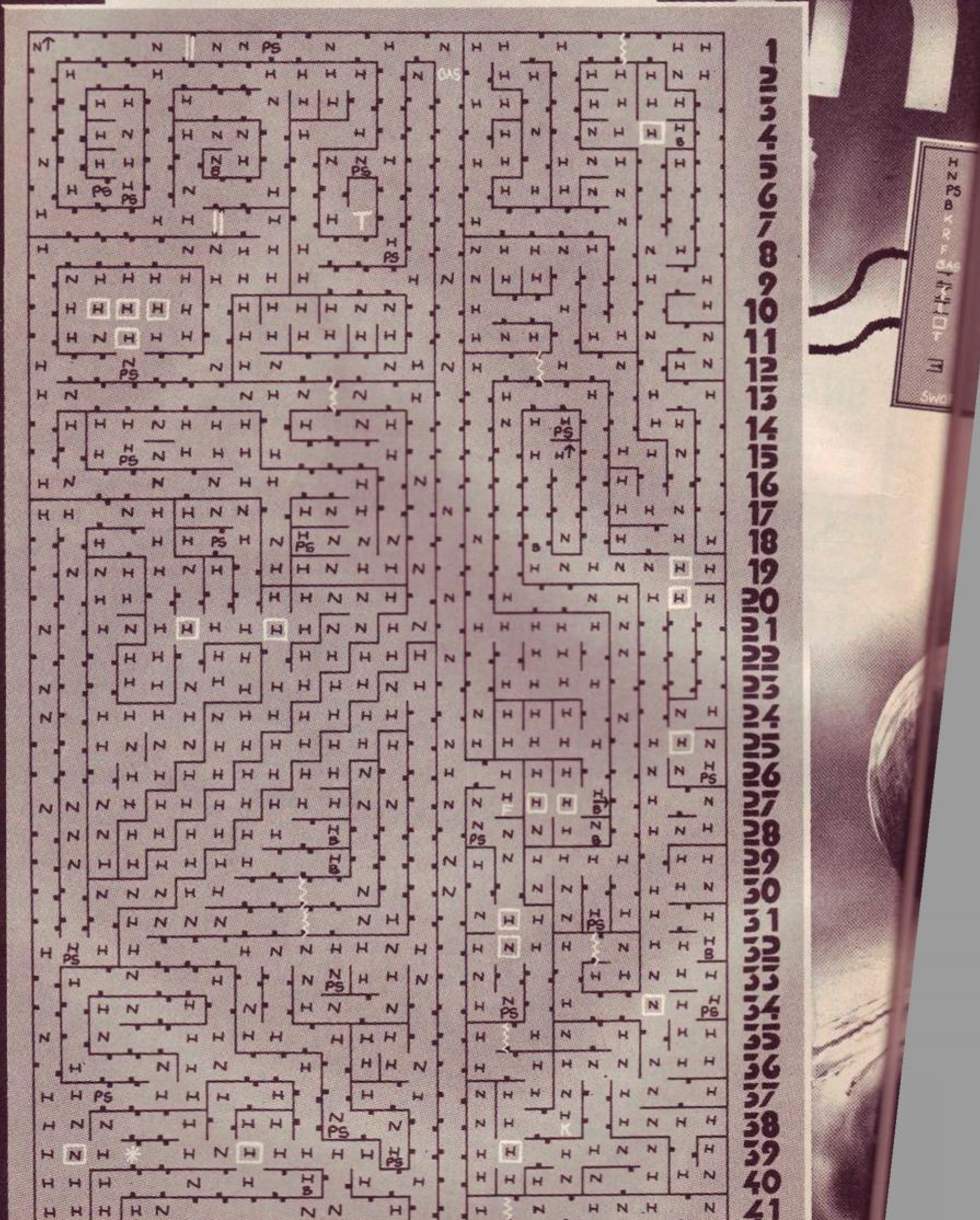


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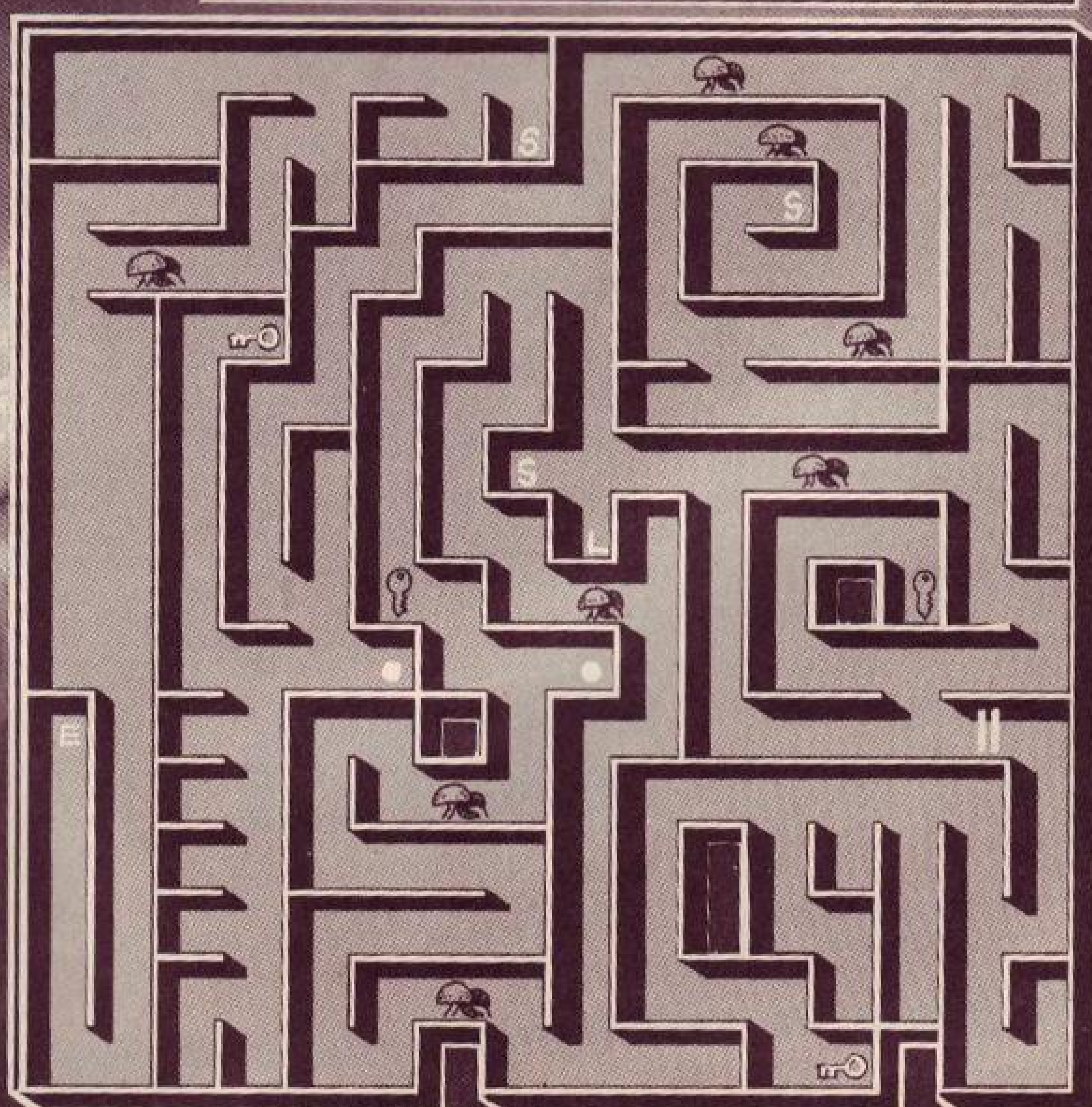


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shoot through this barrier
photon thrusters oscillate across each exit
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Soul of a Robot

DEADLY FUNGUS
DOOR OPENER
TRANSPORTER KEY
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The **standard** Z80 development system consisting of an editor/assembler coupled with a disassembler/dubugger in one package. The cassette version (£21.95) is ideal for beginners while the CP/M version (Devpac80 £39.95) takes full advantage of discs to give you an amazing number of features with full screen editor (ED80), macros, conditional assembly, virtual disking, full operator-precedence arithmetic, disassembly to disc, interpretative execution and much, much more.

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Font64
Comes on cassette (£7.95) or disc (12.95) and allows you to create, edit, animate and print your own font and character designs. Supplied with 6 pre-designed fonts and easy-to-use screen dump RSXs for use on DMPI or Epson compatible printers.

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The Torch
A disc-based tutorial that explains the mysteries of the CP/M operating system to the new user. Supplied on the same disc is a screen-based menu system allowing you to create menus of your favourite programs on disc and select them easily and instantly. All this for only £12.95.

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Your Health and Your Horoscope are the first of a range of expert system applications that we shall be releasing in the next few months; watch out for Your Hand Reveals, the next in the series.

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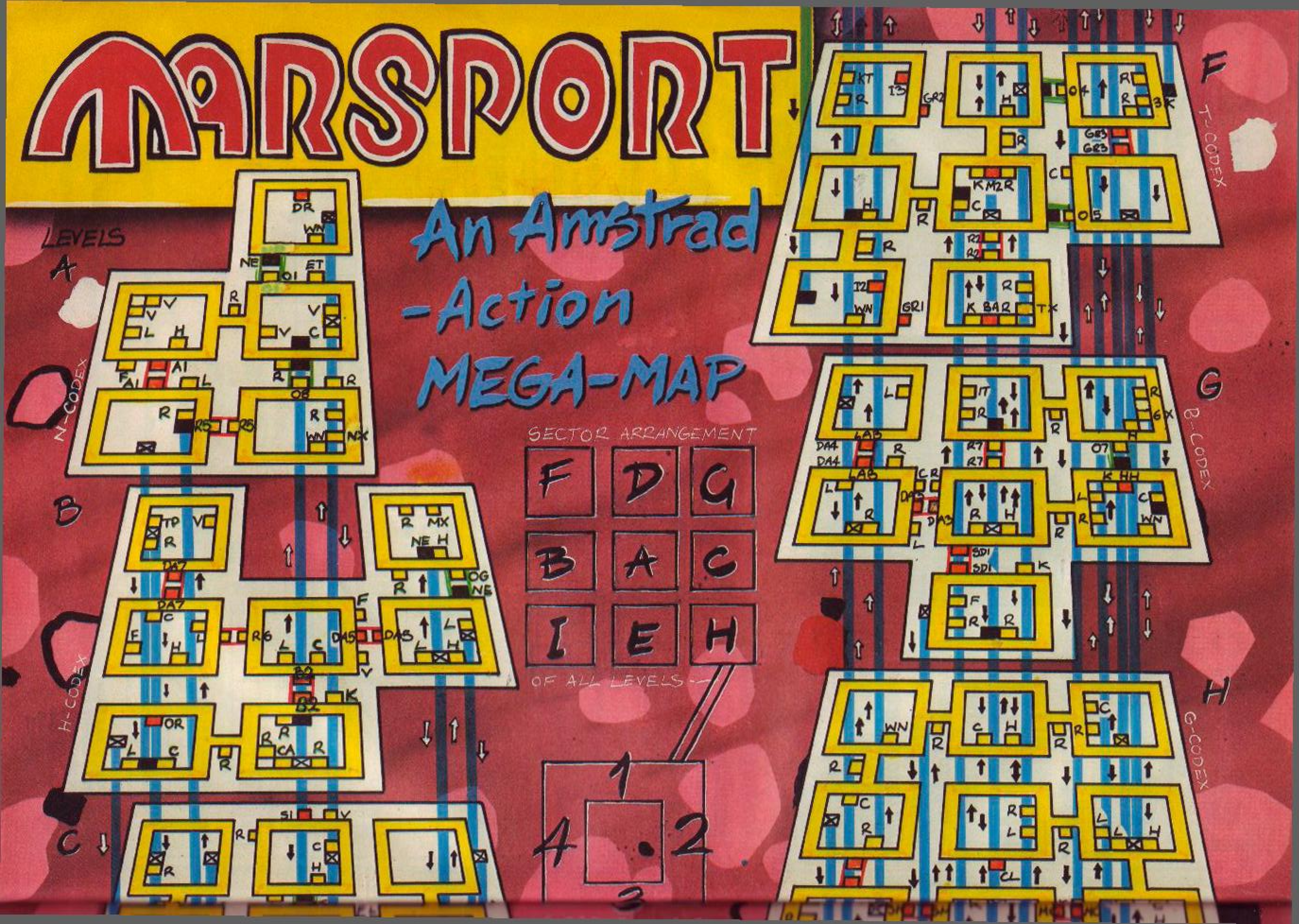
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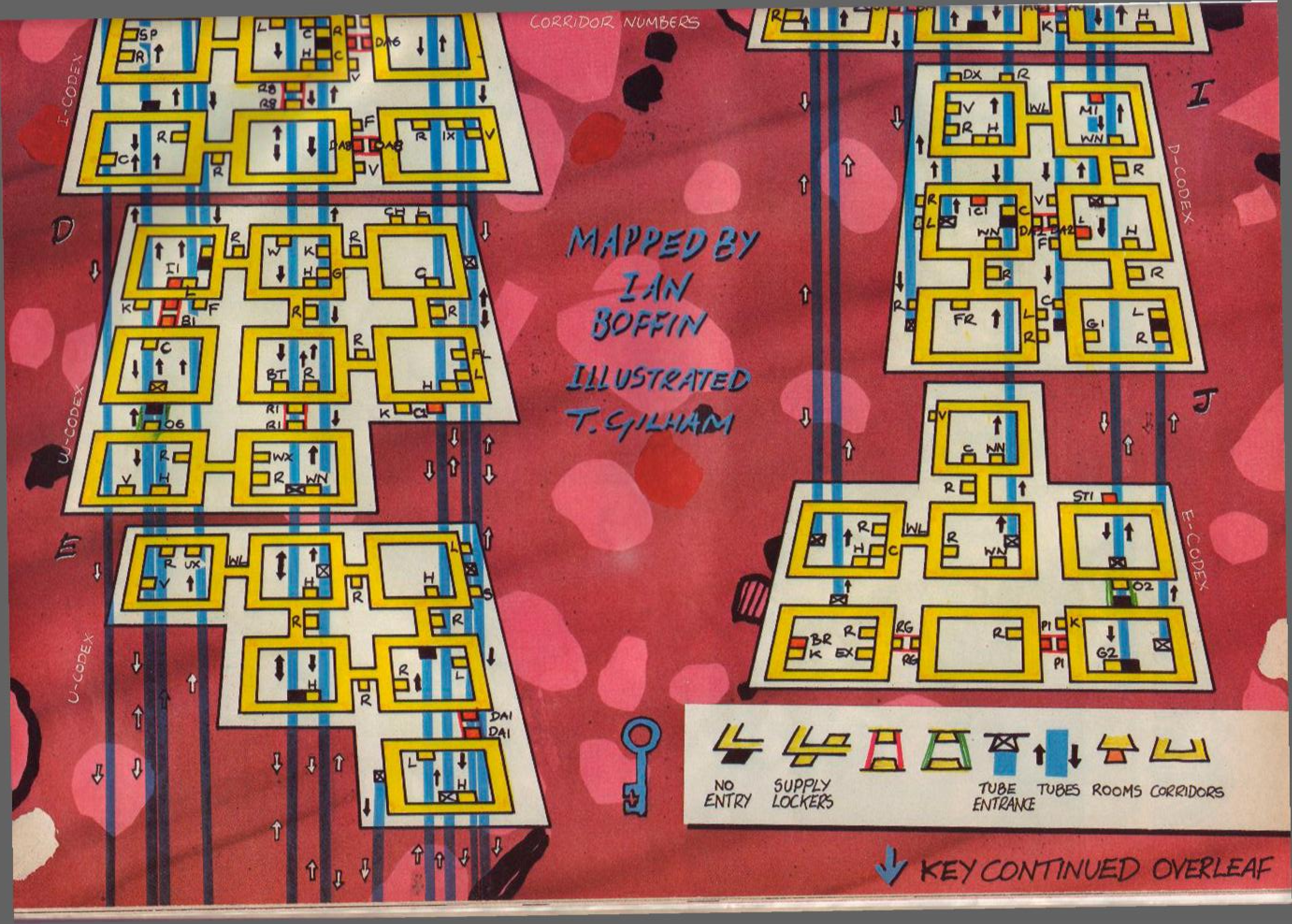
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MARSPORT

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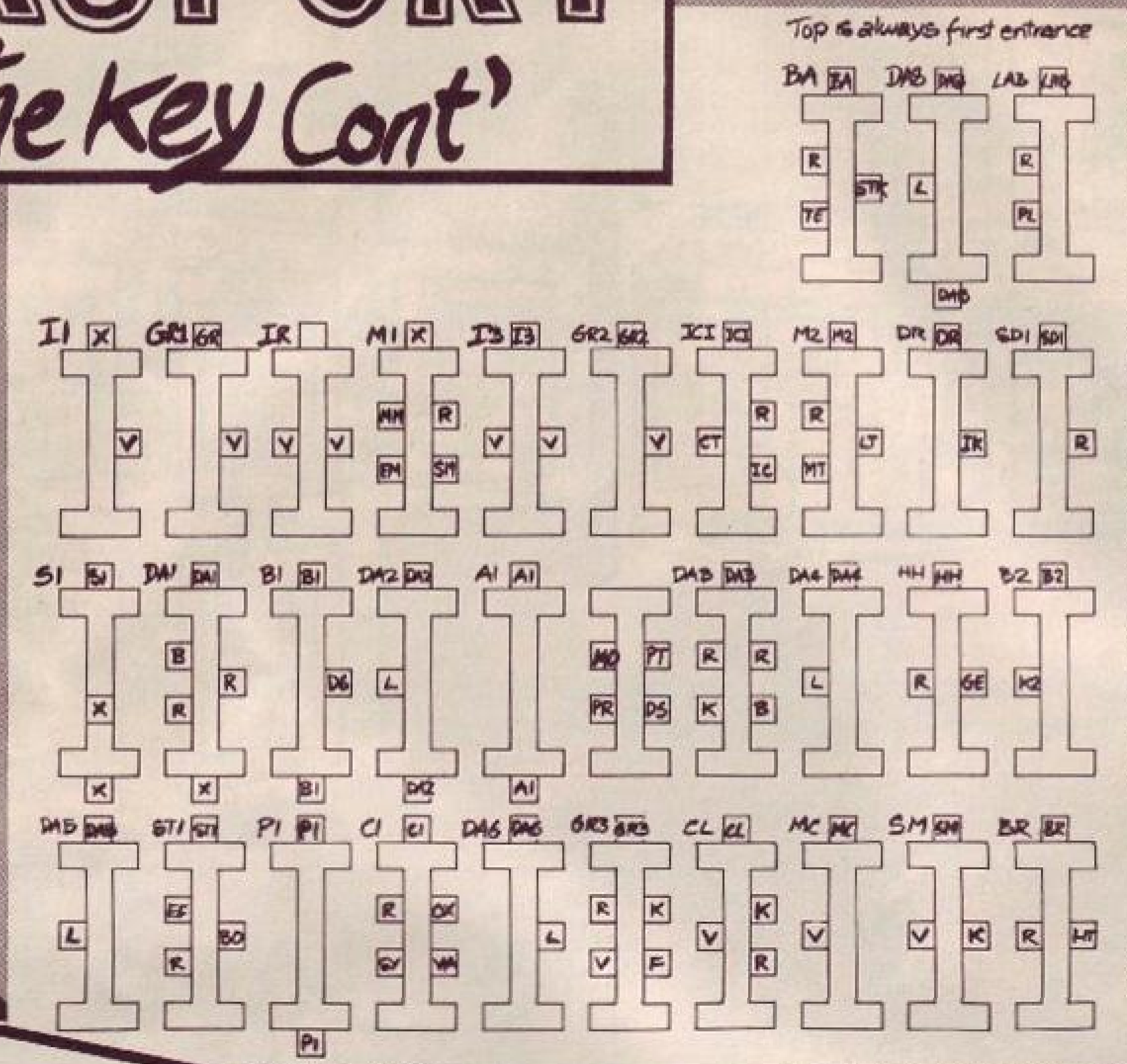



CORRIDOR NUMBERS
I-CODEX
D-CODEX
U-CODEX
W-CODEX
E-CODEX
I
J
D
E
MAPPED BY
IAN
BOFFIN
ILLUSTRATED
T. GILHAM
NO ENTRY
SUPPLY LOCKERS
TUBE ENTRANCE
TUBES
ROOMS
CORRIDORS
KEY CONTINUED OVERLEAF

MARSPORT

the key Cont'

CHEAT MODE

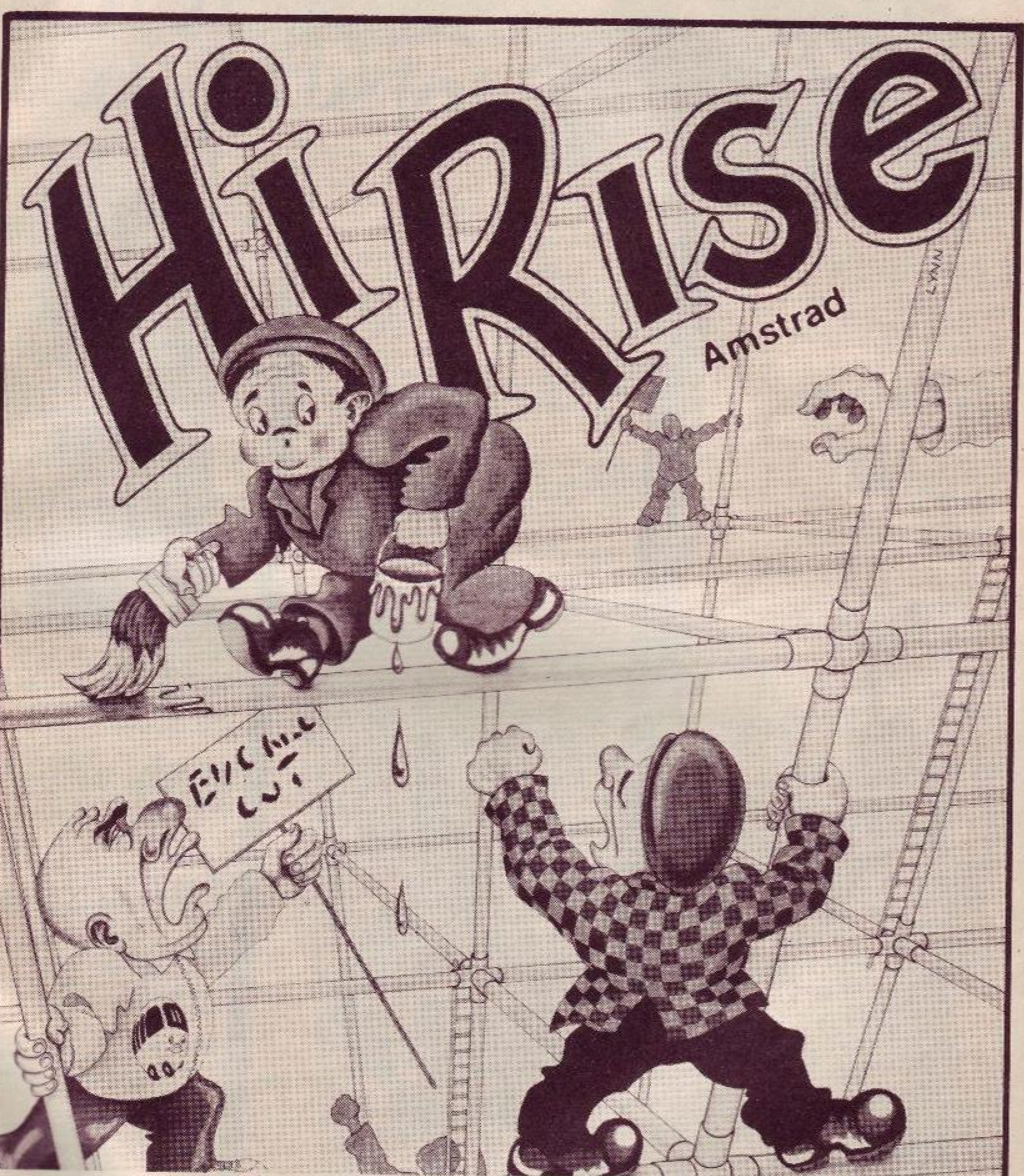


ROOMS	LEVEL	SECTOR
S1 – spacefield	C	D
DA1 – danger(bomb),	E	C
C1 – chemists	D	C
I1 – infomat	D	F
B1 – bakery	D	F
DA2 – danger (gas bomb)	I	C
M1 – map room	I	G
P1 – plant room	J	E
GR1 – games room	F	I
I2 – infomat	F	I
M2 – music room	F	A
GR2 – games room	F	F
I3 – infomat	F	F
IC1 – ice cream	I	A
SD1 – soil depot	G	A
DR – director	A	D
HH – hot house	G	C
A1 – astronomy	A	B
OR – oratory	B	I
B2 – banker	B	A
DA3 – danger(bomb)	G	A
DA4 – danger(sonic)	G	B
DA5 – danger(radiation)	B	A
ST1 – safety	J	C
DA6 – danger(vacuum)	C	A
GR3 – games room	F	C
MC – M-central	H	H
CL – control	H	A
SM – sanctum	H	E
DA7 – danger(nerve)	B	B
BR – boiler	J	I
DA8 – danger(virus)	C	E
BA – bar	F	E
LAB – laboratory	H	B

OBJECTS – in supply lockers

B – bomb
FL – flour
G – gun
W – water
BT – baking tin
CH – charcoal
GL – glass
MM – Mars map
SM – sun chart
EM – Earth map
GZ – gauze
DG – dough
KT – kettle
IC – ice pack
FR – frame
CT – cornet
3K – third key
1K – first key
ET – empty tank
LT – lute
MT – mute
CA – calculators
MO – manifesto
PR – projector
PT – pointe
DS – dais
GE – geranium
2K – second key
BO – boots
EF – ear muffs
SP – steps
SY – syringe
OX – oxygen
VA – valium
IT – insect
HT – helmet
TE – tea
STR – strainer
PL – plans
TP – toupee
WX – w-codex
EX – e-codex
TX – t-codex
6X – 6-codex
NX – n-codex
IX – i-codex
UX – u-codex
DX – d-codex
GX – g-codex
HX – h-codex

V – vidtex
L – locker
R – refuse
O1, 2, 3... – one-way doors
NE – no entry
H – herald
WN – warden
R1, 2, 3... – restricted doors
F – factor
WL – warlord



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Hi SCORE

Ahhh!
12,320 Flemming Pedersen, Denmark.

Air Traffic Control
76% K Clarke, Telford.
70% Andrew Feeley, Whitefield.

Alien Break-In
337,400 Iain McKinnon, Glasgow.

Amsgolf
55 shots Stephen Gray, Bath
56 shots P A Hyett, Cheltenham.
65 shots Sheila Bannister, Hayes.

Android One
17,680 David Litherland, Bolton.

Beach Head
122,100 Jeremy Nargi, Hove.
122,000 Neil Cruickshank, Inverness.
120,000 Lawrence Smith, Newport.

Blagger
49,975 Alain Salesse, Farnborough.
49,335 T Laniado, South Creake.
49,025 Matthew Chester, Louth.

Boulderdash
28,875 Stewart Hackley, Poynton.
23,840 Paul Gill, Cheadle
17,118 John Cussen, Portsmouth

Brian Jacks Superstar Challenge
3,636 George Reaves, Bradford.
3,521 David Millar, Johnstone.
3,481 Robert MacCallum, Edinburgh.

Chiller
8,700 Ian Grainger, Wingate.
6,500 Iain McKinnon, Glasgow.
6,400 Simon Dean, Rutland.

Chimera
875 Jeremy Nargi, Hove.

Chuckie Egg
269,400 Mark Wagner, Pinner.
267,780 Richard Denton, Torquay.
256,430 Gary Callan, Exeter.

Codename Mat 1
1,106 George Reaves, Bradford.
1,050 Samantha Bell, Maidenhead.
711 DG Scott, Dereham.

Codename Mat II
23,960 Christopher Hardy, Weymouth.

Combat Lynx
176,850 Alan Stenson, Catterick Garrison.
136,760 William Jenkins, Cramlington.
89,300 Stewart Hackley, Poynton.

Confuzion
73,715 Susan Morton, Garforth.
73,035 Mark Edmonds, Leigh-on-Sea.
57,490 Jason Grandin, Cardiff.

Devil's Crown
543,780 Jeremy Nargi, Hove.
38,730 MA Clayton, Blackpool.

Electro Freddy
2,750 Simon Dooley, Bolton.
1,870 Andrew Pounds, Thornton Cleveleys.
1,670 Claire Johnson, Sutton Coldfield.

Er*Bert
126,850 Richard Denton, Torquay.
111,000 Lawrence Smith, Newport.
32,500 Peter Glasgow, Livingston.

Everyone's a Wally
1,570 Antony Critchley, Bracknell.
1,570 Paul Carruthers, Lytham.
1,550 Mark Pinner, Bedford.

Fighting Warrior
74,620 Michael Clark, Midlothian.
54,230 Christopher Hardy, Weymouth.
51,890 Kevin Nixon, Rotherham.

Fireant
30,200 Mark Burford, Leamington Spa.
18,200 Gordon Edgar, Buckie.

Frank Bruno's Boxing
29,720 Matthew Burbedge, Sittingbourne.
29,190 Martin Johnson, Hull.
28,600 Andrew Pounds, Thornton Cleveleys.

Fruit Machine
£29.50 Richard Kiddle, Wisbech.
£29.40 Joseph Dittman, Wigan.
£22.00 Harvey Case, Orpington.

Fruity Frank
16,075 Gary John Shanks, Livingston.
15,600 N.Miller, Tonbridge.
10,000 Darren Ithell, Birkenhead.

Galactic Plague
100,610 Joanne Kingdon, Yeovil.
50,190 Craig Rickaby, Newton Aycliffe.
44,190 L Walker, Liverpool.

Gauntlet
11,490 Paul Hyett, Cheltenham.

Ghouls
5,030 Jason Grandin, Cardiff.
1,642 Stewart McIntyre, Bishopbriggs.

Gilligan's Gold
412,000 Michael Clark, Midlothian.
318,179 C Johnson, Sutton Coldfield.
285,905 Andrew Clarke, Hillingdon.

3D Grand Prix
8,750 Christopher Hardy, Weymouth.
8,330 Jeremy Nargi, Hove.
7,322 Keith Millward, Chinnor.

Grand Prix Rally II
54,474 Geoff Kerslake, Woodham Ferrers.
52,355 MI Farrell, Ryde.
51,685 Paul Schofield, Leeds.

Jet Boot Jack
86,925 Flemming Pedersen, Denmark.
25,000 Jeremy Nargi, Hove.

Jet Set Willy
175 items Daniel Hart, Loughton.
125 items Harpal Kooner, Birmingham.
89 items Peter Jones, Maidstone.

Juggernaut
9,500 Michael Speers, Donaghadee.

Killer Gorilla
170,700 Guy Nussey, Stoke-on-Trent.
131,000 Ian Dunn, Cannock.
110,000 Huw Jones, Paisley.

Kong Strikes Back
535,600 C Johnson, Sutton Coldfield.
188,100 Phillip Gower, Newport.
100,030 Frank Griffiths, Birkenhead.

Laserwarp
97,420 Phillip Gower, Newport.
62,380 Christoper Winstanley, Preston.
44,240 Peter Merry, Dumfries.

Locomotion
721 Lawrence Smith, Newport.
192 Iain McKinnon, Glasgow.
165 Jeremy Nargi, Hove.

Manic Miner
250,112 Wayne Learoyd, Bramley.
94,989 Martin Luise, Solihull.
92,804 Gordon Edgar, Buckie.

Minder
£12,666 David Gibbon, Bearpark.
£12,000 Mark Tozer, Canvey Island.
£8,950 Paul Sutcliffe, Shaftesbury.

Moon Buggy
159,100 Lawrence Smith, Newport.
110,930 Patrick Grant, Coventry.
50,500 Sharon Manning.

Mutant Monty
44,950 A Wagstaffe, Whitchurch.
43,180 Alastair Kerr, Plymouth.

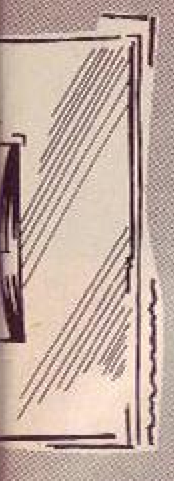
Oh Mummy
28,925 RG Messenger, Perth.
9,470 Claire Johnson, Sutton Coldfield
8,000 Jonathan Eden, Crowthorne.

On the Run
74,110 Daniel Singerman, Southampt
60,000 Ranjit Singh, Queen's Park.

Pinball Wizard
18,325 Flemming Pedersen, Denmar

Punchy
70,130 Richard Denton, Torquay.
59,490 Stewart Hackley, Poynton.

Raid
540,450 Gerry Hughes, Cranleigh.
374,900 Jeremy Nargi, Hove.
361,650 Christopher Hardy, Weym



There have been quite a few challenges this month but disappointingly no replies to last month's. The guilty are obviously too ashamed to defend themselves. We'll start with another apology for an extra nought slipping in from Jon Scruby.

Players' forum

Roland challenge

Looks like Martin Ellerker is going to have some answering to do. Where shall I start? (Re: Roland on the Ropes hi-score – Ed.)

1. It is not possible to score a 75 on the end because the minimum number of points you can score is 100.
2. He would have had to have played the game for 13 hours non-stop. 13 hours is a long stint.
3. There is only room on the high score table for six digits. I wonder how he squeezed on the seventh. By my reckoning the max score would be 999,999 as obtained by Adrian Johnston.

Well there you have it, come on Martin, tell us how you managed it.

David White
Bristol

Well the score just had to go, as did the others over one million until we get a good explanation.

Minor error

With reference to your high score tables and particularly my own high score in *Combat Lynx*, I would like to point out a minor error, which I think was my fault. The score should read 136,750 and not 136,760 as the score is multiplied by units of 50 or 100.

I hasten to add that the score is genuine and that the high score table is saved to tape and can be examined if required. I think that games featuring the saving of score tables must be less prone to cheating and should be an integral part of all games.

William Jenkins
Cramlington.

Couldn't agree with you more about the saved high scores but in this instance we'll take your word for it and amend the score.

Naughty nought

Today, 9/11/85, I bought my second copy of this brilliant mag. Flicking through the pages I looked at the hi-score page and noticed my name and my score for *Oh Mummy*. It was wrong. It was printed that I'd scored 20,00 when it should have been 2,000.

As AA is such a fabulous mag I can only take the blame for adding the extra 0 and I humbly ask you all to forgive me.

Jon Scruby,
Teignmouth.

Well I for one forgive you completely, particularly after all those lovely things you said about us. You'll notice that someone has managed to beat 20,000 anyway this month – anybody got any problems with that?

Roland goes Digging
£306.00 Gary Pearce, Hemmel Hempstead.
£264.80 Jonathan Williams, Sutton.
£235.70 Lawrence Smith, Newport.

Roland in Space
158 pieces Kevin Nixon, Rotherham.
79 pieces Craig Thomson, Eyemouth.
54 pieces Stuart Cresswell, Worthing.

Roland in the Caves
898,540 Gary Wendleken, Brentwood.
888,172 Richard Denton, Torquay.
879,783 Vince Merrell, Edmonton.

Roland in Time
153 crystals Andrew Marshall, London.
149 crystals Kenny Macaskill, Alloa.
143 crystals George Reaves, Bradford.

Roland on the Ropes
999,999 Adrian Johnston, Shrewsbury.
792,300 Jim Mitchell, Havant.
695,000 Kevin Westwood, New Malden.

Sir Lancelot
12,120 Andrew Preston, Stockport.

Sorcery
Lots of people over 97,000

Sorcery Plus
137,527 Paul Broadley, Glasgow.
135,458 David Tompkins, Warminster.
135,151 Andrew Michaels, Stepney.

Space Hawks
77,550 Mark Wagner, Pinner.
75,150 Stewart Hackley, Poynton.
74,850 Gary Callan, Exeter.

Spannerman
66,500 Donald Sharkey, Scunthorpe.
65,000 Stephen Gray, Bath.
47,200 Richard Denton, Torquay.

Mini-challenges

Score challenged: 97,949 on *Sorcery* and other scores not ending in 0.
Challenger and reason: Karl Steanson. You can't get a nine on the end of the score – just a zero.

Score challenged: Scores over 500,000 on *Harrier Attack*.
Challenger and reason: Harvey Case. You can't fly quick enough at that stage without running out of fuel.

Score challenged: 35,000 on *FB's Boxing* by Martin Luise.
Challenger and reason: Andrew Pounds, maximum bonus is 30,000 and this falls faster than the punch score can increase it.

Score challenged: 1,711,600 on *DT's Decathlon*.
Challenger and reason: Joanne Kingdon. There is no pause facility, therefore maintaining the stamina is undoubtedly impossible because you can't stop for a rest. The person must have switched the game on and off several times and added his score as he went along.

Score challenged: Anything over 272,000 on *Chuckie Egg*.
Challenger and reason: Stewart Russell. Because it is not humanly possible to get past level 24. The score for reaching that level is 272,000, ascertained from poking for 255 lives and examining game patterns.

Score challenged: 13,500,110 by Gary Shanks on *3D Starstrike*.
Challenger and reason: Stewart Russell. The minimum score increment is 100 so how did the errant 10 creep in?

We'd be delighted to hear from all the accused if they think they've been wrongly struck off the tables – or were they really telling trying to mislead the great Amstrad public? Let's hear the case for the defence.

STUNNING SOFTWARE $AVINGS!

Wake up to Amstrad Action's unique mail order service

▶ Fast

▶ Economic

▶ Reliable

These pages are called Hot Stuff because they are HOT. They give you a way of getting your hands on sizzling software at sizzling discounts. Basically, you can use the form on p109 to order any Amstrad software you like, whether games or serious. And by collecting the vouchers printed in each issue of Amstrad Action you can obtain discounts of up to 20% – that's a massive saving of £3.00 on a £15.00 order!

The good news doesn't end there. Almost all orders qualify for a great, no-strings-attached FREE GIFT, ranging from blank cassettes to games worth £8. We know of no more exciting way of getting the programs you need.

TO ORDER, USE THE FORM ON PAGE 109

How to use this table

The table allows you to calculate what discount you are entitled to if you enclose vouchers with your order. All you have to do is round up to the nearest pound the total (pre-discount) cost of the software you're buying. Find this figure on the top row of the table and then read down to see what discount you can claim for one, two, three and four vouchers.

EXAMPLE: Suppose you have ordered two games costing £8.95 each. The total pre-discount cost is £17.90. This rounds up to £18. This month you could only send in a single voucher, so reading down from the £18 figure in the top row you will see that you are entitled to a 90p discount. That'll just about buy you next month's slice of Amstrad Action.

Savings table

Total cost of software pre-discount:	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	£7.00	£8.00	£9.00	£10.00	£11.00
One voucher	£0.10	£0.15	£0.20	£0.25	£0.30	£0.35	£0.40	£0.45	£0.50	£0.55
Two vouchers	£0.20	£0.30	£0.40	£0.50	£0.60	£0.70	£0.80	£0.90	£1.00	£1.10
Three vouchers	£0.30	£0.45	£0.60	£0.75	£0.90	£1.05	£1.20	£1.35	£1.50	£1.65
Four vouchers	£0.40	£0.60	£0.80	£1.00	£1.20	£1.40	£1.60	£1.80	£2.00	£2.20

Total cost of software pre-discount:	£12.00	£13.00	£14.00	£15.00	£16.00	£17.00	£18.00	£19.00	£20.00
One voucher	£0.60	£0.65	£0.70	£0.75	£0.80	£0.85	£0.90	£0.95	£1.00
Two vouchers	£1.20	£1.30	£1.40	£1.50	£1.60	£1.70	£1.80	£1.90	£2.00
Three vouchers	£1.80	£1.95	£2.10	£2.25	£2.40	£2.55	£2.70	£2.85	£3.00
Four vouchers	£2.40	£2.60	£2.80	£3.00	£3.20	£3.40	£3.60	£3.80	£4.00

5%

VOUCHER

D ACTION

FREE!

with any order over £5

A C15 data cassette. These cassettes contain high-quality tape especially designed for use by computer owners. They come in library case with blank inlay card.

FREE!

with any order over £15

Your pick of one of the following games, each of which would normally cost £8.95! All are reviewed in AA issue 1.

ROLAND IN THE CAVES (Amsoft)

FLIGHTPATH 737 (Anirog)

ROLAND ON THE ROPES (Amsoft)

SPANNERMAN (Amsoft)

ROLAND GOES DIGGING (Amsoft)

HOT STUFF

The rave way of buying raves

If you're not sure quite what games you'd like you could do worse than make a selection from this list – it's made up of programs given an AA Rave review in this or previous issues of Amstrad Action. Remember that by sending in vouchers you can obtain considerable savings on the listed prices.

YIE AR KUNG FU
Hilarious combat action. £8.95 cass
MARSPORT
Massive arcade adventure. £9.95 cass
BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK
Oh-so-addictive platforming. £9.95 cass, £13.95 disk.
CAULDRON
Beautiful graphics, bewitching game. £8.99 cass.
SPY VS SPY
Wacky cartoon capers. £9.95 cass.
BATTLE OF BRITAIN
Classy wargame. £9.95 cass.
DYNAMITE DAN
Leap, dodge, enjoy. £8.95 cass.
3D GRAND PRIX
Tire-burning graphics! £9.95 cass £13.95 disk.
HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER
Fast-moving 3D terror. £8.95 cass
BRUCE LEE
Leaping and fighting. £9.95 cass, £13.95 disk
RAID
Bombing the Commies. £9.95 cass, £13.95 disk
MATCHDAY
Skilful soccer play. £8.95 cass
DRAGONTORC
A-maze-ing and huge. £7.95 cass
BOULDER DASH
You can't stop playing. £9.95 cass
LORDS OF MIDNIGHT
Great adventure epic. £8.95 cass £12.95 disk
CYRUS 2 CHESS
Looks superb, plays tough. £9.95 cass £13.95 disk
WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST
Smash-hit combat. £9.95 cass

IMPORTANT

► If you send in more than one voucher they must be from DIFFERENT issues of the magazine. (Remember, each one has something different printed on the back!)

► We try to be as accurate as we can in giving details on price and disk-version availability. However we can't be held liable to any errors which may have crept in.

► If you want the disk version of a game you must mark this clearly on the order form, otherwise you'll get a cassette. Do check first that a disk version exists and that you have the right price for it.



HOW ORDERS ARE DEALT WITH

When the magazine was first launched, our mail order operation was dealt with by a separate company based in London. However this proved unsatisfactory, and we are now running it ourselves here in Somerton.

It's being taken care of by the super-efficient Sue Taylor from an office a couple of hundred yards away from the AA headquarters. Unless your order includes programs which our suppliers cannot get hold of for some reason, Sue will despatch all orders within three days of receiving them.

Even taking postal delays into account, you can therefore expect to receive your parcel within about 10 days of sending off your order. If it's delayed beyond that, chances are you've ordered a title which hasn't yet been released. Do please check this point before phoning up!

ADVENTURE STUNNER

Adventure creators are all the rage at the moment – and among the best packages around are the two from Gilsoft *The Quill* and *The Illustrator*. These normally cost £16.95 each on cassette and £19.95 on disk. As a one-off, ultra-generous offer, we're offering BOTH cassettes for just £23.90 – that's a full £10 off the normal price. What's more you'll receive FREE a piece of software which allows you to have both graphics and text on screen simultaneously, thereby combining the two programs.

If you want the disk versions, you can save even more. You'll get both programs on one disk (PLUS full packaging for both programs PLUS the free software described above) for just £27.90 – that's a £12 saving.

Just use the special form on P109 to order. It's a great offer.

FREE!

with any order over £25

Your pick of one of the following super-games, all of which received above average ratings in our first issue:

SUPER PIPELINE II
JAMMIN'
CODENAME MAT
SPLAT!
ROLAND AHOY!

Selecting serious software

If games aren't your scene, how about choosing one of these excellent programs (or any other serious software...)?

TASWORD 6128
Superb word-processor for 6128 owners making full use of the extra memory. £24.95 disk.
TASWORD 464/464D
The earlier versions for 464 or 664 owners. The disk program includes a mail-merge facility. £19.95 cass, £24.95 disk.
MASTERFILE/MASTERFILE 128
Still the best database program for Amstrads. The 128 version uses the extra memory of the 6128. £24.95 cass, £29.95 disk. 128 version £39.95 disk.
MASTERCALC/MASTERCALC 128
Great value spreadsheet from the programmer of Masterfile. £24.95 cass, £29.95 disk. 128 version £39.95 disk.
TRANSMAT
One of the best utilities for transferring tape programs (including Transmat itself) onto disk. £7.95 cass.
MINI OFFICE
Remarkable value prog including word-processor, spread sheet and database. £5.95 cass, £9.95 disk.
ELECTRIC STUDIO LIGHT PEN
In our view the best-value light-pen package around. Includes sophisticated graphics software. £19.95 cass, £26.95 disk.

Overseas readers can join in!

Readers in the Republic of IRELAND can order any of these goods at the same rates as British readers provided that payment is made in pounds Sterling. If you wish to pay in Irish punts you must add a IR£3.50 surcharge IN ADDITION to allowing for the current exchange rate – that's what it costs us to pay in your cheques or postal orders.

Readers elsewhere in EUROPE must add 25% to the cost of their order to allow for extra postage rates. Payment must be in pounds Sterling.

If you live OUTSIDE EUROPE please add 50% to the cost of your order to cover postage. Please also specify whether you require air-mail or surface delivery. We will pay refunds in cases where the postage turns out substantially cheaper than the extra money you have paid. Once again, payment must be in pounds Sterling.

HOT STUFF

Amstrad Action Readers' Charts

We've been on tenterhooks here for the past few days. Could *Fist* hang on at the top, or would a revitalized *Sorcery* spirit that coveted position away from it? Would December's Mastergame *Highway Encouter* steamroller its way up the charts?

In the serious charts *Tasword* and *Mini Office* have been swapping the lead for the past few months. Which one wins this Christmas? Read on for all the answers.

It's topsy-turvy time at the top of the charts this Christmas. *Sorcery* has regained the place usurped by *Fist* last month in the games chart, while more seriously *Mini Office* has established a commanding lead over *Transmat*, the tape to disc utility. Tasword has seen a sharp decline in support this month. But if I know my *Tasword*, it will bounce back.

The most significant new entry in the games chart is the magnificent *Boulderdash*, which seems to be catching on at last. New in the serious chart is Hisoft's *C* compiler, which indicates that some of you out there must be beavering away at your own programs. Why not let us know what you're up to?

Next month's charts must surely feel the effects of all the Christmas software. So watch this space.

The Voting System

For anyone new to our state-of-the-art voting forms and system - or anyone STILL having trouble - here's another run down on what to so and how to do it.

You have at your disposal a TOTAL of 10 votes for each chart. These can be split up any way you like on up to five titles, but the number of votes you give to the different titles must add up to 10.

For example, on the games chart you could give all 10 votes to a single game. Or you could 5 votes to one game, 2 to another, and 1 each to three others. You just have to allocate your 10 votes to reflect your preferences as accurately as possible. What you CAN'T do is give five different games 7 or 8 votes each. That's greedy.

One further thing you certainly can't do is send in photocopies of the form. There have been attempts at jiggery-pokery in the past, so we want to avoid any possibility of it happening again.

SERIOUS SOFTWARE TOP 10

1. Mini Office
Database - 26.3%

2. Transmat
Pride Utilities - 14.8%

3. Screen Designer
Amsoft 9.7%

4. Tasword
Tasman - 13.6%

5. The Quill
Gilsoft - 6.7%

6. Electric Studio Light Pen
Electric Studio - 4.8%
7. DK Tronics Light Pen
DK Tronics - 4.6%

7. DK Tronics Light Pen
DK Tronics - 4.6%

8. Easi-Amsword
Amsoft - 4.2%

9. Hisoft C
Hisoft - 2.8%

10. Masterfile
Campbell - 2.5%

GAMES TOP 20

1. Sorcery
Virgin/Amsoft - 12.5%

2. Way of the Exploding Fist
Melbourne House - 11.6%

3. Knight Lore
Ultimate - 6.6%

4. Highway Encounter
Vortex - 4.0%

5. Sorcery +
Virgin/Amsoft - 4.4%

6. Dun Darach
Gargoyle - 3.9%

7. Football Manager
Addictive - 3.8%

8. Frank Bruno's Boxing
Elite - 3.6%

9. Alien 8
Ultimate - 3.2%

10. Combat Lynx
Durell - 2.7%

11. D. Thompson's Decathlon
Ocean - 2.6%

12. Nonterraqueous
Mastertronic - 2.6%

13. 3D Grand Prix
Amsoft - 2.2%

14. Matchday
Ocean - 2.1%

15. Starion
Melbourne House - 2.1%

16. Soul of a Robot
Mastertronic - 1.9%

17. Jet Set Willy
Software Projects - 1.85%

18. Cyrus Chess
Amsoft 1.8%

19. Boulderdash
Mirrorsoft - 1.6%

20. Wizard's Lair
Bubble Bus - 1.5%

THE ALL-IN-ONE ACTION FORM

Fill in as much of the form as you wish (front and back). Then cut out the ENTIRE PAGE (even if you've only filled in parts of it) and post it to:
AA Forms, 18 Pinewood Drive
Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6JP

IMPORTANT
Don't forget to fill in this bit!
Name__________
Age__________
Address__________
____
Telephone number__________

WIN £25 OF SOFTWARE!!

By filling in this part of the form, you gain the chance to win £25 of software of your choice. THREE of these unspeakably exciting prizes are on offer. All you have to do is invent a couple of little phrases to run along the bottom of our pages next to the words AMSTRAD ACTION – something as idiotic, yet appropriate as those in this issue.

The winners' phrases will undoubtedly be used in future issues, as may other peoples. Anything to save us having to think of them!

PHRASE 1:

PHRASE 2:

Adventure special offer

Please use this form if you would like to order Gilsoft's programs THE QUILL and THE ILLUSTRATOR at a saving of at least £10. The package which includes an important extra piece of software free is described on p107.

To order, simply circle ONE of the following and enclose a cheque or postal order made out to Future Publishing. Overseas readers, please read the panel on p107 which also applies to this offer.

Please send me the Gilsoft programs on CASSETTE for a total of just £23.90.

Please send me the Gilsoft programs on DISK for a total of just £27.90.

Mail Order Form

I would like the following titles:

Game	Software house	Retail price
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Total cost pre-discount:....................

I enclose 0/1/2/3/4 vouchers and claim a discount (see Savings Table) of: £...
Amount payable (total cost minus discount):£...

If the amount payable is over £5.00 you may claim your FREE DATA-CASSETTE by placing a tick here:...

If the amount payable is over £15.00 you may claim your FREE GAME by circling one of the following:
Rol. in the Caves/Rol. on the Ropes/Flightpath 737/Rol. Goes Digging/Spannerman

If the amount payable is over £25.00 you may claim your FREE SUPER-GAME by circling one of the following:
Super Pipeline II/Jammin/Codename Mat/Splat!/Hunchback

IMPORTANT: Only ONE free gift per order is allowed.

I enclose a crossed cheque or postal order for the Amount Payable made out to Amstrad Action Mail Order. Please rush me the software.

Game chart voting form

I would like to vote for the following game(s):

GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	NO. OF VOTES
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
		Total number of votes = 10



Serious software voting form

I would like to vote for the following piece(s) of 'serious software':

PROGRAM	SOFTWARE HOUSE	NO. OF VOTES
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
		Total number of votes = 10

CHRISTMAS QUESTIONNAIRE

In our first issue we asked for your views on the magazine, and your answers were extremely revealing and helpful – they led to a number of changes in the magazine. Three issues later we think it's time to repeat the excercise. Do please try to find time to fill in this questionnaire as carefully as possible. We want to keep the mag as close as possible to what you want it to be, and this is how we find out.

Fill in your name and address on the form on the reverse of this page!

1. Please give a rating out of 10 to each of the following AA regular sections according to how much you like them:

- Ed lines (editor's pages)....
- ReAction (your letters)....
- Amscene (news, gossip)....
- Action Test (game reviews)....
- Serious software....
- Plug-ins (add-ons)....
- Adventure....
- Type-ins (prog. listings)....
- Cheat mode (playing tips)....
- Competitions....
- High Score....
- AA charts....
- Hot Stuff (special offers)....

Which of the above would you like given MORE space?

Which of the above would you like given LESS space?

2. Please give a rating out of 10 for the following 'one-off' features appearing in this issue:

- Cover cassette....
- Money board game....
- Ocean Empire feature....
- Marsport map....
- Nonterraqueous/S.O.A.Robot maps....
- 1986 diary....

3. Please give a rating out of 10 for any of the following features from previous issues you can remember:

ISSUE 2
- Telecommunications special....
- PCW 8256 review....
- Everyone's a Wally map....
- Picture feature on PCW show....

ISSUE 3
- Elite preview....
- Christmas add-ons guide....
- Machine code introduction....
- Sorcery Plus map....
- Dragontorc map....
- Gargoyle feature....

4. Please circle the letter of your choice. Which of the following most closely describes your feelings about our margin character Toot?

a) He's fantastic.
b) He's often amusing.
c) He's OK.
d) He's annoying.

Should he be given a)more space? b)less space? c)about the same? d)removed from the mag entirely?

5. What do you feel we should do about our games content?

a) greatly increase it?
b) slightly increase it?
c) keep the balance as it is?
d) slightly reduce it?
e) greatly reduce it?

6. What's your view on the amount of space we devote to program listings?

a) It's too much.
b) It's too little.
c) It's about right.

Have you tried typing in any of the listings we've printed (yes/no)?.......

Were you basically satisfied with the results (yes/no)?.......

7. Do you have any suggestions for features or topics we could cover in future issues? Please specify...
....
....
....

8. Please place a tick next to any of the following words which you think describe the LAYOUT and LOOK (as opposed to the written content) of Amstrad Action. Put a cross next to any which you think definitely don't apply.

DYNAMIC
MUDDLY
APPEALING
OFF-PUTTING
TRENDY
BORING
EXCITING

Do you have any other comments on the magazine's look?

9. Please place a tick next to any of the following words which you think describe the mag's writing style, a cross next to those which don't.

FRIENDLY
ENTERTAINING
OVER-TECHNICAL
UNDERSTANDABLE
PATRONISING
EGOTISTICAL
APPEALING

Do you have any other comments on the writing style?

10. Please give an overall rating out of 10 and brief comments on any of the following computer magazines you are familiar with:

AMSTRAD ACTION....
Comments:

AMSTRAD COMPUTER USER....
Comments:

COMPUTING WITH THE AMSTRAD
Comments:

PERSONAL COMPUTER WORLD
Comments:

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES
Comments:

AMTIX
Comments:

YOUR COMPUTER
Comments:

11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to make on the magazine (please send a separate letter if you wish)?
....
....
....

High-score challenge

I hereby challenge the following high scores printed in Amstrad Action:

	GAME	SCORE
1.		
2.		

I think the score(s) impossible because:

High-score entry

I would like to register my high-scores in the following Amstrad games:

	GAME	SCORE	TIME TAKEN	
1.				
2.				
3.				

I promise these are genuine scores achieved without using cheat methods.

Signed

★ ★ ★ Special Christmas subscription offer ★ ★ ★

GO FOR GOLD!

★ **Your choice of two FREE US Gold games when you subscribe to Amstrad Action.** ★

▶ They're Amstrad

▶ They're American

▶ They're Amazing

This year's Christmas spirit appears to have gone to our publisher's head. He's turned stark, raving bonkers. After disappearing into a tiny, blacked out room for two weeks' uninterrupted thought, he emerged with a subscription offer so ridiculous it took an hour and a half of questioning by two men in white coats to understand what he was saying.

Despite all our efforts to persuade him otherwise, he insists on going ahead, so it falls to my lot to inform you that anyone planning on taking out a subscription to this journal could be in for a very, very happy Christmas.

Here's how it works: you send us £15.50 (if you live in the UK) for a 12-month subscription and we send you not only your favourite (well, OUR favourite) computer magazine each month for a year, but also a very special Christmas gift of two of these amazing US Gold games.

The games are in fact worth £9.95 each, making a total saving of, I make it, £19.90 – as I was saying, quite insane.

There isn't any catch. We're just exceptionally, ridiculously keen to have your company over the next 12 months.

As you can see from the offer form, you don't quite have a free choice of any two games. They're divided into two groups of three, and you can't choose more than one program from group B – you must either take two from group A or one from each group. But since all six are pretty juicy, we don't think that's much of a limitation. Come on in and join Britain's friendliest Amstrad club.

Blurb Writer

Advantages of subscribing

There's more than one reason, apart from the prospect of superb free software, for taking out a subscription to Amstrad Action.

▶ You're guaranteed each month's copy, delivered hot off the press straight to your home – no frustrating trips to newsagents who've sold out.

▶ You guard against any future price rises in the magazine.

▶ You qualify for further special offers in future issues.

▶ You give valuable support to Amstrad Action, the magazine written for Amstrad addicts by Amstrad addicts.

Existing subscribers read this!

Even if you've already subscribed to Amstrad Action you can still take part in this special offer – in two different ways.

EITHER you can fill in the form on this page in the usual way, and send it to us together with £15.50 in which case we will send you your two free games and extend your subscription by another 12 months. If you do this, please write the words EXISTING SUBSCRIBER on the form after your name.

OR you can simply order any of the six games for a special subscribers' price of £6.95 each. To do this simply write down on a piece of paper your name, address, the subscriber's number printed on your address label (if you can find it!), and the games you want to order. Send it to Subscribers' order, Amstrad Action, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PS, together with a payment of £6.95 made out to Future Publishing for each game ordered.

If you live outside the UK

You'll be pleased to know that even if you live outside Britain you can still take advantage of this offer, only we have to charge more to take account of the substantially higher postage costs.

The rate for anywhere in Europe outside the UK and Eire is £25, payable by sterling cheque or international money order.

For Eire the rate is still £15.50, but this payment must be made in pounds sterling, not Irish currency.

Start of the US Gold rush

It probably hasn't escaped your notice that over the last 18 months US Gold has become Britain's most prolific software house, licensing all the best American software for distribution in the UK. But so far most of the titles it's released have only been available on other micros.

Now all that is changing. The six programs pictured on this page represent the start of a major push onto the Amstrad. All six titles have had massive sales on the Commodore 64, and US Gold has been employing the services of some of Britain's best Amstrad programmers to make the conversions to our machine. The three conversions we've seen at time of writing (*Beach-Head, Bruce Lee, Raid*) have all been extremely impressive – *Bruce Lee* and *Raid* were given AA Rave reviews in our November issue.

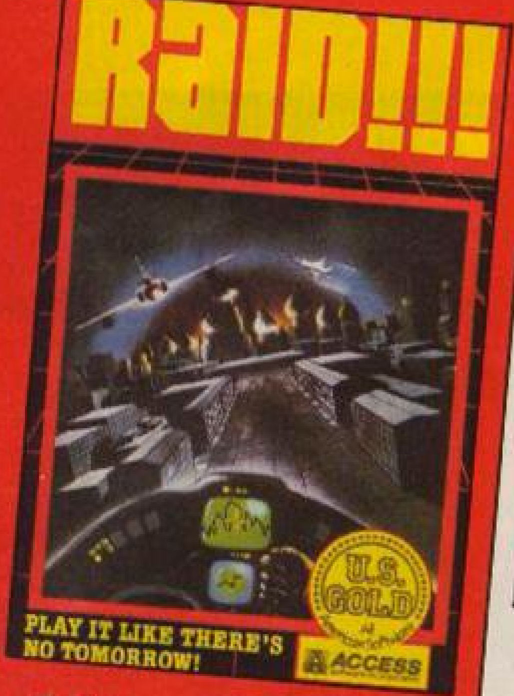
Suffice to say we could think of no more exciting range of games to help persuade you to subscribe to Amstrad Action.



BEACH-HEAD

This program caused a sensation when first released in the UK with its dramatic 3D depiction of naval warfare. You control a fleet of ships which you must guide through several very different battle stages before taking the fight onto land with a tank assault on the fortress of Kuhn-Lin.

Pick up TWO



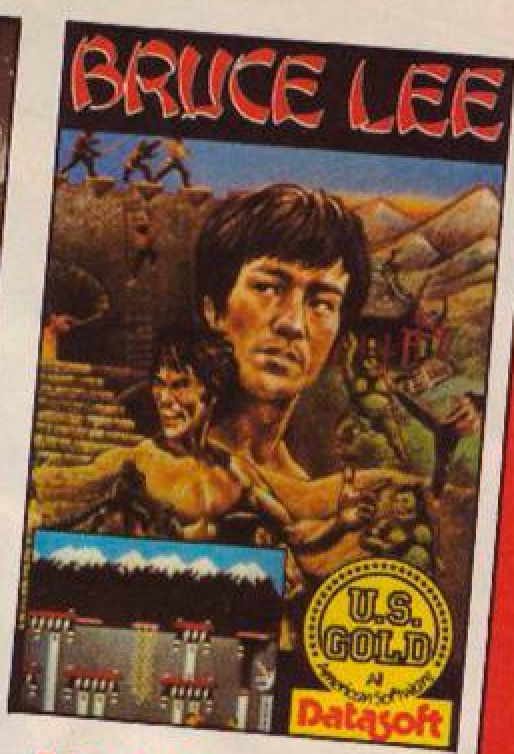
RAID

The dramatic and controversial follow up to *Beach Head* in which you organise an air-strike on nuclear missile silos to try to pre-empt a launch against American cities. Follow this up with an attack on a building which looks uncomfortably like the Kremlin. Probably the most exciting shoot-em-up on the Amstrad. Excellent graphics.



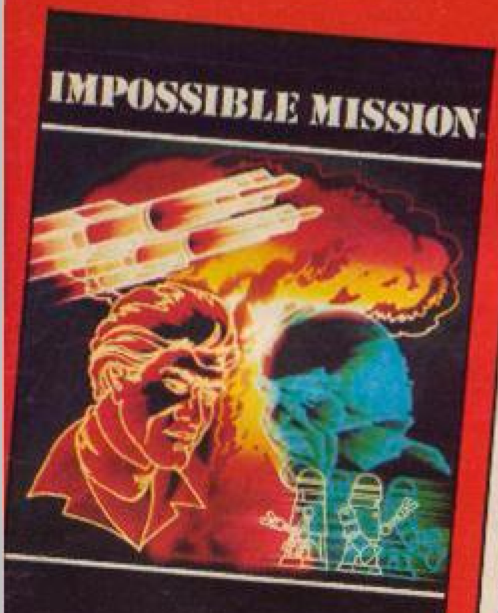
DAMBUSTERS

A flight simulator with a difference. You take on the jobs of all seven crew members of a Lancaster bomber as you re-enact the famous 2nd World War bombing mission. The program offers you several different control panels, plus views through the cockpit window as you weave past search-lights, flak and barrage balloons before launching your bouncing bomb. Superbly atmospheric.



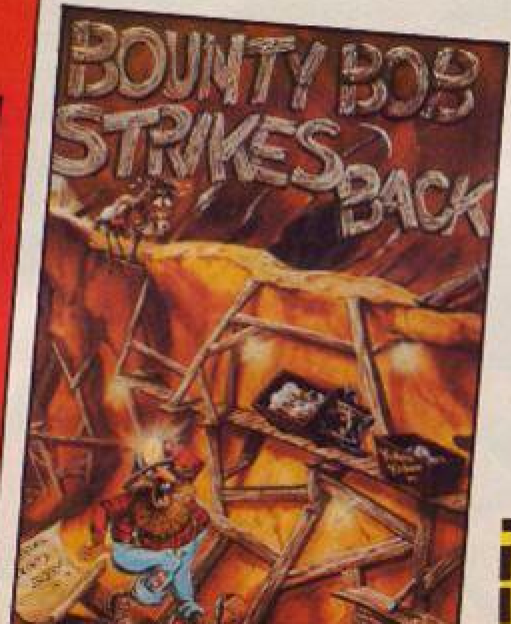
BRUCE LEE

A highly-entertaining platform game in which you take the part of the famousmartial arts hero. Punch and kick your way through 20 screens of devious obstacles, hounded all the while by the cunning Yamo and Ninja.



IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

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BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK

Miner 49'er was the program which started the craze for wacky platform games. Bounty Bob is its follow up, developed in the States over many months, and it's more addictive than ever with 25 diabolically difficult screens. Matter transporters, hoists, slides, suction units, cannons, pulverisers – they're all there.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Apart from *Beach-Head* released in the summer, all these games are extremely new. Indeed, at time of writing these pages several have not yet been released. They are all due out by the time this magazine goes on sale or soon afterwards. However in software production delays can easily happen, and if either of the games you order is not yet available it will hold up the despatch of your parcel.

If you're keen to get the software promptly, please refer to the Ed Lines page for the latest information on release dates and choose your programs accordingly.

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We present an exclusive preview of two hot new games from Durell – Somerset's finest games software house

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Infocom's famous adventures hit the Amstrad! *Hitch Hiker's Guide, Zork Trilogy* and much more reviewed in depth by The Pilgrim. Plus the latest Level 9 blockbuster, *The Worm in Paradise*, and all the tips, pokes and letters that make The Pilgrim the liveliest adventurer around.

▶ Games-a-go-go

A veritable feast of new games reviewed with our customary thoroughness – *Impossible Mission, Swords and Sorcery, Frankie, Spitfire 40.* Not to mention the latest mega-games from Ultimate.

▶ Map magic!

Hush hush doesn't accurately describe the secrecy surrounding the AA cartographers' latest project. But we can tell you that it's big, big, big. And will be printed in glorious AmstradActionColour.

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